# MAKERS OF MODERN EUROPE

COUNT CARLO SFORZA

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Makers of modern Europe :
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# COUNT CARLO SFORZA

For over thirty years Count Sforza followed the career of diplomacy, beginning in Egypt. He was at the Italian Embassy in Paris during the second Dreyfus trial.

To the conference of Algeciras, in 1906, he was sent as chief of the Italian secretariat. After Algeciras he went to Constantinople as counselor of the embassy and saw there the Young Turk revolution. In 1911 he became Minister to Peking.

During the World War Count Sforza was sent first to Belgrade, and then to Corfu, as Italian Minister to the Serbian government, and, in daily contact with the hardships of the exiled Serbs, he learned to recognize their capacities.

After the war he was appointed High Commissioner at Constantinople and there at once divined the importance of the movement led by Kemal Pasha.

The years 1920-'21, when Count Sforza was Foreign Minister of Italy, were those in which the nations of Europe had to fit themselves within the mold of the peace treaties and find a way to live with each other afterwards. As Foreign Minister he secured the settlement of the Serbo-Italian dispute in the Treaty of Rapallo, perhaps the outstanding triumph of his career.

Afterward he became Ambassador in Paris and held that post until Mussolini's fateful "march on Rome" in the autumn of 1922. Sforza, the liberal statesman, immediately sent in his resignation in a telegram which became famous.

Few men have known personally and intimately so many of the makers of modern Europe or are qualified to speak of them with such authority.

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MAKERS OF MODERN EUROPE

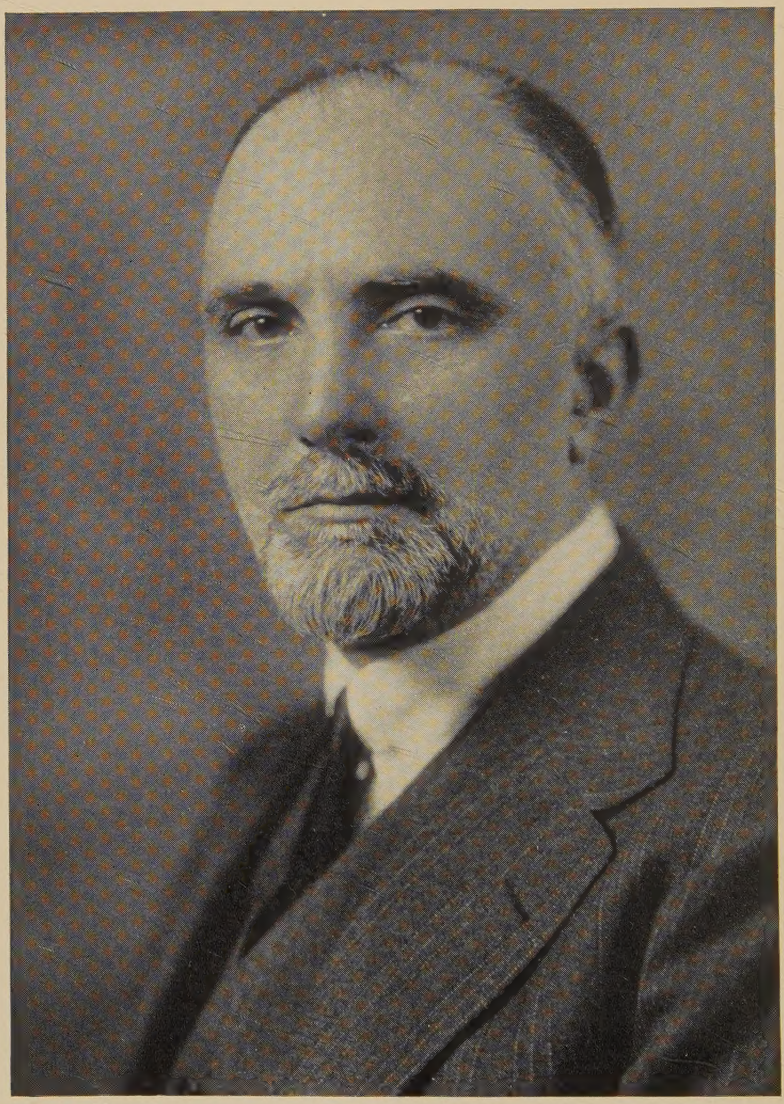

*Photo by Marceau*

Count Carlo Sforza

# MAKERS OF MODERN EUROPE

*Portraits and Personal Impressions and Recollections by*

COUNT CARLO SFORZA, 1872–
*Former Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs*

ILLUSTRATED

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*The strength of a city is not ships or walls, but men*—THUCYDIDES

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# CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| | **INTRODUCTION** | |
| I | A Personal Foreword. Men and Events. Historians and Statesmen | 13 |
| | **THE END OF A WORLD** | |
| II | Franz Joseph, The Last Legitimate Sovereign | 21 |
| III | Archduke Rudolf, The Dreamer of Dreams | 33 |
| IV | Archduke Franz Ferdinand, The Man Who Might Have Saved Austria | 42 |
| V | Aehrenthal, The Last Servant | 54 |
| VI | Tisza, The Magyar | 66 |
| | **SHADOWS OF THE PAST** | |
| VII | Empress Eugénie | 81 |
| VIII | Lord Curzon | 89 |
| | **THE WAR** | |
| | **SOME DRAMATIS PERSONÆ** | |
| IX | Foch, The Frenchman | 103 |
| X | Cadorna, The Iron Rule | 113 |
| XI | Diaz, Common Sense | 120 |
| XII | Pius X and Benedict XV, The Two Popes of the War | 130 |
| XIII | Pachich, The Essence of Serbia | 148 |
| XIV | Venizelos, Land-Hunger | 164 |
| | **DEMOCRATIC EUROPE** | |
| XV | Lloyd George | 183 |
| XVI | Bonar Law | 193 |

| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| XVII | BALFOUR | 199 |
| XVIII | CHAMBERLAIN | 206 |
| XIX | POINCARÉ | 209 |
| XX | MILLERAND | 218 |
| XXI | BRIAND | 227 |
| XXII | GIOLITTI | 236 |
| XXIII | BISSOLATI | 255 |
| XXIV | ALBERT AND ELISABETH OF BELGIUM | 261 |
| XXV | VANDERVELDE | 272 |
| XXVI | KRASSIN | 276 |
| XXVII | STAMBULISKY | 281 |

A CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY

HOW FASCISM CAME

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| XXVIII | SONNINO, OR THE DIPLOMATIC ORIGINS OF FASCISM | 291 |
| XXIX | D'ANNUNZIO, OR THE LITERARY ORIGINS OF FASCISM | 310 |
| XXX | FACTA, OF THE IMMEDIATE ORIGINS OF FASCISM | 319 |
| XXXI | MUSSOLINI, OR THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF FASCISM | 323 |
| XXXII | PIUS XI, OR THE ROMAN CHURCH AND FASCISM | 331 |

DICTATORS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| XXXIII | LENIN | 347 |
| XXXIV | MUSTAFA KEMAL | 354 |
| XXXV | PILSUDSKI | 374 |
| XXXVI | TROTZKY AND STALIN | 381 |
| XXXVII | YUAN SHI-KAI AND SUN YAT-SEN | 386 |

CONCLUSIONS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| XXXVIII | WHITHER EUROPE? AUTOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY. EUROPE AND AMERICA | 401 |
| | INDEX | 411 |

## ILLUSTRATIONS


| | |
|---|---|
| Count Carlo Sforza | *Frontispiece* |
| | *Facing Page* |
| Count Sforza and his children | 52 |
| Lord Curzon | 92 |
| Marshal Foch talking with Count Sforza | 110 |
| Venizelos | 168 |
| Lloyd George, Curzon, Sforza, Briand, Barthou, Marquis della Torretta, Sir Maurice Hankey, and M. Massigli | 186 |
| Balfour | 202 |
| Sir Austen Chamberlain | 206 |
| Poincaré | 216 |
| Millerand with Sforza, Jaspar and Lloyd George | 220 |
| Millerand in his private study | 224 |
| Briand | 234 |
| Giolitti with Sforza | 248 |
| Bissolati | 258 |
| Queen Elisabeth of Belgium on the steps of the Pisa cathedral | 262 |
| Queen Elisabeth of Belgium at a balcony of an Italian villa on the Riviera | 270 |
| Il Duce—the "movie" actor | 326 |
| The Pope in his studio in the Vatican | 338 |
| Mustafa Kemal | 360 |
| Pilsudski with his family | 376 |
| The "White House" | 376 |

MAKERS OF MODERN EUROPE

# INTRODUCTION

## A Personal Foreword. Men and Events. Historians and Statesmen

*Il faut donc sonder comme cette pensée est logée en son auteur; comment, par où, jusqu'où il la possède: autrement le jugement sera précipité.*—Pascal.

# MAKERS OF MODERN EUROPE

## I

## INTRODUCTION

### A Personal Foreword

WHEN people insisted that I should write this book, one of the objections my laziness argued was that there would be too much of the *I* in it. Running through the proofs, I certainly came across a great many *I*'s. But—or is that possibly our happy faculty for self-delusion?—they struck me as being neither so cumbersome nor so hateful as they might be. *I* is hateful to readers, not in itself, but when the gulf widens between the literary vanity of the author, who thinks a great deal of his *I*, and the indifference of the readers, to whom it becomes more and more uninteresting. In this book, the *I* is only admitted as a key to show how men and events struck a contemporary: a psychological evidence, nothing more. Pepys, after all, filled his book with *I*, although he never thought of himself, but only of English life as it appeared to him. True that he was that rarest of things: a great writer without knowing it.

If I have reasons to believe that it is worth giving my contribution to the recent European history of men and events, they are that chance placed me in a position to treat and work with the men I am going to study, as an equal among equals, and that I have been behind the scenes and frequently knew the empirical and personal reasons for their

acts, even when they cloaked them with pompous words in Blue or Yellow or Green Books, or from the rostrum of some Parliament.

Calling up my recollections of these men and of my dealings with them, I was amazed to discover how living and fresh their mental and moral personality—their human character, in a word—had remained in my mind; whereas I found the events and negotiations, which sometimes had bound me so closely to them, lost in the thick fog of indifferent oblivion. I have, for my part, felt in that a further proof of the fact that "affairs" are but the passing toys of politicians and of nations, while what really matters is the moral tendency behind them—and human characters.

The value of my testimony, of my impressions, is in no way impaired by the fact that I did not take part in the negotiations that led up to the Treaty of Versailles; one may almost say that there was no human action there, so much did each one seem all too often fettered by pride (which was called patriotism), by vengeance (which was called justice), by fear (which was called prudence), with the result that, even of some of the many just and moral decisions of the Versailles Treaty, one could say that they were "laudable acts committed with dark intentions," to repeat the psychological remark of Thomas Aquinas.

Having, on the other hand, taken part in the more important conferences that followed the war, I witnessed the sobering down that enabled men's minds to begin recovering their balance; that was, I think, the most favorable moment in which to gage the actors. Most of them I watched through a trial, than which I know none more painful: I mean the readjustment of old psychologies to new situations.

The tragedy of the post-war period has indeed been this: men brought forth into a new world, but thinking with old brains and feeling with old passions. The contradic-

tions between old tendencies and new problems continue, indeed, to be the greatest danger of the near future in Europe, and, on a smaller scale, even in America; all the more reason, therefore, to study the first group of those who fell a victim to it.

## Men and Events

The ultimate fate of political problems rests with the inexorable evolution of history transcending the will of individuals. But from men, frequently from one generation of men, the successive forms and halts of these problems depend: German unity, Italian unity, could not but be the ineluctable event of the nineteenth century; but it was Bismarck who gave to Germany an iron coloring that she would in all probability not have taken without him; it was Cavour who gave Italy a physiognomy of freedom and of tolerance. Had Napoleon III understood Bismarck better, had Austrians been able to understand Cavour, France and Austria would probably have defended themselves better.

*Il mondo va da sè,* says a proverb of my country, a country which has been through everything in history. Yes, but that the world shall progress along more or less smooth paths, will always depend a great deal on men.

Besides, now that the guileless wave of positivism that swept over the preceding generation, is spent, we see the interest in the action of men reawakening everywhere. Bolshevism that claimed to have invented the collective man sets up the cult of its founders almost as a religion. In new Russia, one stumbles at every step upon a statue of Lenin; and the least of his words is not any less commented upon than the Koran by a professor of El-Azar.

Even immutable Asia is looking out for men; to wit, Sun Yat-sen who, with his "Testament" and his empty

*Minn,* is threatening Confucius and his domination, twenty-five centuries old, and hitherto unchallenged.

## Historians and Statesmen

Historians can not but describe what statesmen accomplished: at most, what they left undone; having tried to do. Historians can rarely describe the secret hopes, the doubts, the inner struggles of their heroes. When they do, it is a reconstruction from dead papers. One who has been a partner and an equal can at least say what he was obliged to think of their psychology.

And it is even a token of his impartiality—for he had no interest in coloring these men according to his preferences; he had to negotiate with them; he knew that behind their dispatches and their ambassadors, their own self was what mattered; and his interest lay in accurate surmise: *"sonder,"* as Pascal said, *"comme cette pensée est logée en son auteur; comment, par où, jusqu' où il la possède: autrement le jugement sera précipité."*

To maintain to my judgments this value of investigation, I have had to put it down as it alternately struck me: hence an apparent confusion in my book, which I have taken good care to leave. It is the hall-mark of its sincerity. This confusion, furthermore, helps to bring out the relations between various characters, and the importance, so difficult to grasp, of the human factor in the development of events. As I myself detest *arranged* books, I can only write for those readers who share my taste for the justification which Pascal, again, has made of his *Pensées: "J'écrirai ici mes pensées sans ordre, et non pas peut-être dans une confusion sans dessein: c'est le véritable ordre et qui marquera toujours mon objet par le désordre même."*

It would have been easy for me to systematize the few

ideas that, sometimes even against my will, have guided me throughout these pages. And then? The readers who will feel and share them will prefer to have to sort them out of their apparent disorder.

Suffice it to say that if this book awakens the feeling that, theories and attitudes aside, many men, from so many different countries, logical Frenchmen and empirical Englishmen, Red Russians and White Russians, old Italians and newcomers from Oriental Europe, all are moved more or less by the same springs, even when they go in different directions, it will not have been entirely useless. Nothing is useless that gives a lesson of tolerance. To love one another is too difficult; that is why pacifist propaganda is so sterile.

Less sterile—because, to begin with, less thaumaturgical—is it to try, not to love one another, but to understand one another. That is the excuse and the reason for this book.

# THE END OF A WORLD

A land of slavery, of inertia, of death; an anomaly in the 19th century; a mystery of immobility in the universal movement of Europe.—MAZZINI (1833)

## II

### Franz Joseph, The Last Legitimate Sovereign

A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY autocrat, congealed and revived in the nineteenth and twentieth, Franz Joseph is to political history what certain neolithic animals that I have seen uncovered, frozen and untouched, in the deserts of Mongolia, are to natural history. He himself admitted, speaking to Roosevelt during one of the visits which the latter paid to different capitals of Europe in 1910, that he was "the last monarch left in Europe." At least, that is what Roosevelt told me in Rome, where I often met him at American Ambassador Leishman's. I own that the phrase struck me as a little embellished by Roosevelt's rich imagination, but the sense of it was certainly true.

I hesitated at first to begin by writing about Franz Joseph, inasmuch as I have spoken with him but once.

But I have so frequently heard ambassadors of his, and even Austrian Cabinet ministers—men who, for years, saw him every week—admit that they had always felt they were speaking, not with a living man, but with an organization, a principle, a precedent, a sort of personified, yet withal impersonal Austria; and, on the other hand, I have heard so much about Franz Joseph, the man, from some among the very few who, at least, imagined they might know him and who belonged to an old social species where writing is still considered as the mean attribution of low-born quill-drivers, that I have thought it worth while to depict Franz Joseph, the man, such as I could make him out from that archaic phenomenon, Franz Joseph, the Emperor-King. For instance, when a mere boy, it is true, I knew well the only

Archduke who held out against the Emperor joyously and who died as skipper Johann Orth; and later, for years, others like his brother, the scholarly Archduke Ludwig Salvator, who wrote books in collaboration with an uncle of mine. I make bold to think that they told me more things than they themselves suspected.

If I mention my rather indifferent first-hand recollections it is only because to this day they bring back to mind the air of unreality which pervaded functions, gatherings and men in old imperial Vienna.

It was in 1910, at a *Cercle,* before a *Ball bei Hof*—in those days it was important to differentiate between that and a *Hofball* which was far less exclusive—that I was introduced to the Emperor. At the *Cercle* each ambassador stood at the head of his staff with the rare fellow-countrymen to whom a right of presentation was conceded. Staying at the time in Vienna with my fiancée's family, I was the only stranger at the ball. As usual, the Emperor exchanged a few words with each one of the ambassadors—how was he?—and, topic even a little more intimate,—had he had any shooting of late? If the ambassador represented a sovereign, he added a few words for the latter; never for nonentities like a Taft or a Poincaré. At the end of this conversation either the ambassador bowed and the Kaiser went on to the next group, or he asked leave to present a new member of the Embassy if there was one, or the stranger. The only question the latter was entitled to was this one, put in French, repeated a thousand times since 1848 and, since 1848, always in the same room: "Do you like Vienna?" With me, that evening, the rite was changed, which—we were in Vienna—created quite a sensation. To my bow the Kaiser had answered with a novel question, and in Italian: *"Xe un teribil calor qui dentro: no le par?"*[1]

[1]So terribly hot here to-night; don't you think so?

The following day, at the Jockey Club, Prince Montenuovo, the Hof-Marshal, commented upon the extraordinary favor the Kaiser had shown me by speaking to me in Italian. I asked him whether the Italian had not really been Venetian patois. And Montenuovo, who never forgot that, through his grandmother, Marie-Louise, Napoleon's widow, he was cousin to the Emperor, and who soon tired of formality, declared the patois to have been Veronese.

"You know," he added, "the Emperor as a youngster practised Italian with a lady from Verona with whom he discovered the charms of the quaint Veronese dialect along with a lot of other pleasant things." . . .

Such was Vienna. Peasants and *Bürger* and provincial nobles revered the Emperor as the venerable ruler who devoted himself to the welfare of his subjects. The aristocracy living in Vienna, entrenched in her privileges, sure of herself, knew how to smile and judge, even if she almost never did so with foreigners, and never with Austrians outside her pale. But it was a *Schloss* and Jockey Club criticism, with no political purport. The Austrian *Hochgeborene* had no right to speak, and they knew it.

Of course, archdukes and Austrian aristocrats were right when they pointed to Franz Joseph's lack of *Gemütlichkeit,* to his cold, aloof, reticent ways; to his heartless dealings with the servants of the State who had ceased to be useful. But they complained only when they themselves were hit in their interests or in their personal freedom. When, with unparalleled meanness and cruelty, the Emperor struck at Benedek after the latter's defeat in the 1866 campaign against Prussia, none of them protested in the least; Benedek had no blue blood in his veins; he was not one of them.

Indeed, no imperial or royal ingratitude ever went so

far as that which Franz Joseph showed toward Benedek after the defeat of 1866. Benedek had for weeks refused to accept the High Command against Prussia, alleging that, as he had served all his life in Italy, he did not know the field of operations. For reasons of dynastic prestige (the warfare in Italy was reserved to Archduke Albert, because there the Austrian Army held impregnable positions) the Emperor obliged him to comply with his wishes. Defeated at Königgrätz, he had nevertheless managed to withdraw his army and to reorganize it in Moravia, where it could still have sustained the fighting. But peace came, and with peace the need for a scapegoat upon which to lay the burden of defeat.

Dragged before a special military commission, Benedek declared that as he had accepted the High Command he also assumed all its responsibilities and accused no one. He was cashiered. A few days later, Franz Joseph sent an archduke to ask him for another sacrifice: his word of honor never to justify himself in writing to the public. Benedek obeyed. And as soon as the Kaiser had his written promise, a declaration was published in the official *Wiener Zeitung* condemning the loyal and brave general in the hardest terms ever used in Austria. The Kaiser knew the value of Benedek's word and struck the blow, incited—I heard this from the lips of an archduke—by the imperial confessor who thought it his duty to show that a Protestant like Benedek had really been too impudent in accepting one of the highest places in Catholic Austria.

Apart from the fact that the moral death-blow dealt to Benedek probably constitutes the lowest episode on record in the history of a nineteenth-century European Court, it would be a mistake to accuse Franz Joseph, as king, of egoism or of ingratitude. Within the limits traced by moral law, sovereigns have not only the right, but—as long

as their office exists—it is also their duty to be in a certain sense egoistical. However, apart from the flagrant infringement of moral laws, in Benedek's case Franz Joseph's egoism was blind and unforeseeing, for—to enhance by Benedek's condemnation the prestige of Archduke Albert who had won in Italy—Franz Joseph had aroused in the army a feeling that immediate dynastic considerations weighed more with the Emperor than his responsibilities as Chief Lord of the Army.

What, in my opinion, has not been said of Franz Joseph, not even in the excellent work which Redlich devoted to him in 1929, is, that he was not egoistic for State reasons, not in the pursuit of future interests, which might yet justify the existence of dynasties in the service of the State. Franz Joseph is, to my mind, historically guilty of having been subjectively selfish only, whereas one might—or, some would say, one should—acquit him entirely had he been a political and dynastic egoist.

Let us begin with the first great diplomatic episode of his reign, when he "astounded the world with Austria's ingratitude"—as the saying went everywhere in the 'fifties—siding, as he did, during the Crimean War against Czar Nicholas I who in 1848 had given him a throne by quelling the Hungarian Revolution with a Russian Army. Why the absolutistic Habsburg preferred the Liberal Anglo-French to the safe autocracy of St. Petersburg has for decades been a riddle to historians. It is impossible to see what he hoped to gain from this change of policy, the slogan of the Austrian *Drang nach Osten* having been invented much later.

What I heard about it from relations of his who spent their days in Spain and in Italy in order to live free; what I have gathered from his most secret letters of the time that Republican Austria has had the great merit of publishing, has led me to believe that Franz Joseph, in the hour of

danger, turned against his "greatest friend," against the man who had saved him five years earlier, simply because he was tired to death of having to be grateful and of hearing about his gratitude.

The explanation ceases to seem extravagant or rash when one stops to consider one fact in Franz Joseph's life that no one can deny: in the seventy years of his reign he had more Cabinet ministers than any other sovereign; always, except in one or two cases, he chose mediocre personalities and eliminated the strong ones. They would have bored him. He began in 1848 with Prince Schwarzenberg, the very type of the accomplished Austrian cavalry officer, but, as Koloman Tisza said of his own son Stephen, "as bad a coachman as he was a good rider." Franz Joseph created a new Ministry as soon as he had mounted the throne; it was a revelation, for the new minister was simply the head of the police. The untold numbers of the Emperor's letters and notes—I have read hundreds of them—show how closely he followed and how much he encouraged this low work. He really entrusted to myrmidons and spies the task of keeping order in his Empire. Informers thrived, and spying crept everywhere.

The drawing up of secret *Berichtes* became the favorite occupation of all government officials who wished for rapid promotion; the disease even spread among the members of the aristocracy. And, center of this mechanism, the Sovereign spent a great many hours of his day following up with minute care these papers, these files, often aimed at his own ministers. No real men, only cringing *Beamte,* could have stood such an atmosphere.

He failed therefore—and through selfishness, through pettiness—in this the most important quality in a ruler: to suffer that a great minister be in power. William I of Prussia was a good man, but of mediocre intelligence. He

remains all the same a great sovereign, for, in spite of the thousand little wounds inflicted thereby on his pride, he always kept a man of Bismarck's size in power. Victor Emmanuel II generally did the same thing with Cavour. And yet he frequently suffered in his heart to see Italy put its whole trust in the great Liberal statesman.

This one feature alone would explain the bitter *boutade* Empress Elisabeth once uttered to her relatives of Bavaria: "Poor Franzi has the soul of a non-commissioned officer."

If his reign had an "idea" it was the transformation of unitarian autocratic Austria, where everything was "K. K." (Imperial-Royal, all united) into a twofold Austria-Hungary, where everything became "K. u. K." (Imperial *and* Royal). It was in 1867 that Franz Joseph, tired at last of the Magyar opposition, accepted the *Ausgleich* (compromise) drawn up for him by the Hungarian Déak, and restored the Kingdom of Hungary as a separate entity. He, the Emperor, became there the "King," respected because he had sworn to abide by the Thousand-Year-Old-Constitution, because he had been crowned with the sacred Hungarian Crown, wherein, according to Magyar sophistry—did not Bismarck say that all Magyars were either hussars or lawyers?—the authority of the King and the rights of the nation blended mystically.

The Magyars are marvelously gifted—I mean the Magyar aristocracy—to give a deep impression of sincerity throughout the world when they speak of their love for their rights and of liberty. In reality, under cover of the Thousand-Year-Old-Constitution, they mean *their* right over the Slav races that were subjects of the Hungarian Crown, and the liberty to impose on these races, which they naïvely believe to be inferior, the blessings of Magyar leadership.

When Franz Joseph accepted the *Ausgleich* in 1867, he finally secured peace with the obstinate Magyars, but he

paid for this peace with the freedom of those Croats who, faithful to their Kaiser, had shed so much blood in the wars against the Italians in 1848 and '49. As crowned King of Hungary, he handed them over defenseless to the most violent Magyar oppression; the same thing happened to the Serbs of the Banat, and to the Rumanians of Transylvania. (The only ones who did not suffer too much from Hungarian tyranny, against which no appeal could now be made to Vienna, were the Italians of Fiume; simply because they were not numerically important in the Kingdom and because their natural suspicion of the neighboring Croats was an asset for the scheming Magyar policy).

Once more, Franz Joseph's mistake was not moral, but political; for he bought his personal peace by betraying the very mission of his House. For centuries the Habsburgs had one *raison d'être* in this: they acted in Vienna as the highest and equally impartial arbitrators of all the subject races; with Dualism, Franz Joseph admitted that two equal and constitutionally independent administrations, a German one in Austria and a Magyar one in Hungary, should constitute two national hegemonies under which vegetated, bereft of political rights, with no possibilities for the future, Italians, Czechs, Southern Slavs and Rumanians. It was the end of Austria, or, what comes to the same thing, the end of her historical mission.

One question arises. How did this man, who never understood his highest duties, who evaded them with a moral cowardice that his mental limitations can not excuse, since he always discarded the collaboration of those who might have proved creative personalities,—how did this man command throughout the whole of his long life universal deference and good will?

As ever the reasons are many. Certainly not the main cause, but yet one not to be neglected, was the propaganda

undertaken by the Roman Church, and especially that of the Jesuits, who always fought to enhance the prestige of a system based entirely on the outward manifestation of respect for the Catholic religion. (No matter if noble minds among the Catholics in Austria complained secretly that religion was becoming a dead thing as in Orthodox imperial Russia, and for the name reasons: bishops and priests had become servants of the State, and totally deprived of individual moral freedom.)

In those countries, like England and the United States, which the Catholic propaganda did not reach, what probably saved Franz Joseph was the dignified isolation in which the Emperor maintained himself, his dread of publicity and his dislike of all the vulgar ways of coming into the limelight that, toward the end of his reign, came into fashion with the last of the Hohenzollerns.

Among the Anglo-Saxon people, their ignorance of the true significance of the Habsburg dynasty in the history of Europe throughout the last century, increased their readiness to swallow the stereotyped clichés about the venerable Monarch and to indulge in facile pity.

I strongly doubt whether he deeply felt the tragic sorrows that have caused a wealth of cheap literature to grow up around him. Yes, his wife, the beautiful Elisabeth, died, stabbed by an assassin, on the shores of the Lake of Geneva; his son, Rudolf, committed suicide with his own mistress; his nephew and heir, Franz Ferdinand, was murdered in Sarajevo. But the words that were put on his lips then—"Nothing in this world has been spared me!"—savor so much of literature that the likelihood of their ever having been pronounced at all is very doubtful.

His intimate papers, now all to be seen in the Vienna archives, throw the fullest light on the political methods of Franz Joseph, on the Emperor, in a word, but very little

on the man, probably because the man had been completely absorbed by the Emperor. Only one paper among thousands allows us a glimpse of the man. It is not long before the murder of Elisabeth. As usual, she is abroad. And on a long sheet of paper one finds, written in the Emperor's hand, this telegram:

"Her Majesty the Empress of Austria,
"Corfu.
"Have arrived Buda-Pest in excellent health. Weather is beautiful, but very cold."

The signature: the two initials, "F. J."

After which, under a long and tidy line traced by him, follows on the same sheet, in the same hand, a second telegram:

"Frau Catherine von Schratt
"Ischl, Villa Felicitas.
"Have you arrived at Ischl safely? How are you?"

The signature is the same: "F. J."

Frau von Schratt was his mistress, and everybody knew it, as it appears from the fact that the signature was the same for the two telegrams.

When the news was brought to the Emperor, on the evening of the fatal July 28, 1914, that his nephew and heir had been murdered at Sarajevo, he kept silent for a while, then he said, more to himself than to his general aide-de-camp, Count Paar, who described the scene: "God permits no challenge; a Higher Power has reestablished the order which I had no longer been able to maintain."

These words reveal the Emperor's firmest belief, his faith in the glory of his family, the maintenance of his power, his right to rule over the subject peoples, with no one above him but a "Higher Power." Probably the great-

est fear he had ever had in his life was the horror he had felt at the idea that Franz Ferdinand, his heir, might, once he had come to the throne, abolish the rights of succession of the archdukes on behalf of the son he had had through his morganatic marriage to Countess Sophie Chotek. It was against this danger that, according to the Emperor, a "Higher Power" had reestablished the order.

It was to preserve the inheritance of the Habsburgs, and for that only, that Franz Joseph worked, schemed and struggled all his life. His whole life long he believed that, through his descent and as head of the Habsburg family, he had been invested with a superior right, and that his subjects were his thing.

It was almost more than the juridical conception of "divine right." The Empire over which he reigned was *his* Empire; the peoples who made it up, *his* peoples. Compared to a belief so naïve yet so strong, the pompous talk of a William II on his divine right, on the "old German God," only proves that the Hohenzollern was not so certain of what he was advancing. He talked too much about it. Franz Joseph, on the contrary, was so certain of it that he never mentioned it. His outburst on the death of Archduke Franz Ferdinand is a unique case; and even so, he was speaking to himself. The only palpable result of this rooted belief in his right to absolute power was that, although devoid of any imagination, he dared all his life long to take steps that would have made others tremble who were more intelligent than he, for was he not the Emperor? He seemed strong, and he was autocratic, for never could he see the far-off dangers looming ahead of him, the new energies that were slowly coming to life in the depths of the people's conscience. When, on ascending the throne, he abolished the constitution, the thing seemed risky even to old State servants who hated the very idea of a constitution.

They would have hesitated, just as, at the same time and for the same reasons, they hesitated and trembled in Prussia. He did not hesitate. Braver? No; blinder one might say. Just as one may say too that he dared and sometimes succeeded because he alone was imbued with an absolute conviction of his rights.

That is why he will remain as the last Sovereign who sincerely believed in his legitimate right to govern peoples and to bequeath them to his descendants.

It is said that, at the close of his long life, when Europe had for months been wallowing in blood, he had the feeling that the Habsburg Empire was doomed: a feeling that must have added a final touch of tragedy to the trials of his life. I am not so sure of this. It was in his blood not to doubt the fate of his House; the only thing that might have made him doubt was, not wars nor defeats, but the fact that his own archdukes, the members of his own family, no longer believed in their House.

But they, one and all, some from fear, others from shame, hid this from him during the rare visits they paid him at Schönbrunn, where, on the evening of his death, he almost had to be dragged from his writing-table. "I still have to read, to sign," he murmured like an automaton, while his aide-de-camp, General Margutti, finally made up his mind to have him laid on a bed,—the bed on which the last of the legitimists passed away an hour later.

## III

### Archduke Rudolf, The Dreamer of Dreams

FEW men were as antithetical to one another as were the two successive "heirs" of Franz Joseph: his son, Rudolf; his nephew, Franz Ferdinand. Different in education, in culture, in mind, in tastes, they differed also in their family life, in the atmosphere they surrounded themselves with, and—even more drastically—in what they thought that, to save the Empire, their political program ought to be.

Rudolf hated the cold and formal Catholic bigotry that in Austria was called religion, a religion from which all inner intensity of life had disappeared; Franz Ferdinand was hailed as the official champion of this blind bigotry.

Far more than by her unbearable jealousy, Rudolf felt himself very quickly, and for ever, estranged from his wife, Stéphanie, daughter of Léopold II, King of the Belgians, by her misunderstanding of all those ideas that were dear to him and to her seemed mere fads. The only serene oasis in Franz Ferdinand's tormented and sullen life was his marriage with Sophie Chotek.

In one thing was there some analogy between the two men: they each felt that the fate of the House of Habsburg could only be saved by a radical change in methods and in goals; with each one of them their program was a sort of mystery that had its followers and its devotees, but, at the same time, its silent and implacable enemies.

But the analogy even here goes no further; for this happened: the more gifted, the more cultured, of the two

drew up a nebulous political program, full of immediate and potential contradictions, a program in which ideas set out in an artificial scheme ignored the reality of facts. Whereas the other, stubborn and ignorant, perceived the one solution that might, to my mind, have given a new lease of life to Austria, even at the beginning of this nationalistic twentieth century of ours.

So much has been written about Rudolf, although his name and his fate have most often, too often, recalled exclusively another name—Mayerling, the shooting-box where he died with his mistress, Mary Vetsera—that it may seem difficult to find anything new to say. But now that the Imperial Archives at Vienna have been thrown open to the public since the fall of the Empire, final documents have been brought to our knowledge which have disposed of the legends that had grown round the two suicides of Mayerling.

As to the manner of Rudolf's death there is no more doubt left, now that the various farewell letters have been published that he and the young Mary Vetsera left behind. It was said by some that their death had been a rather vulgar fracas in which everybody concerned seemed to have had his or her head bashed in with champagne bottles, and that on this account it was hushed up; others, who did not believe the secret was being well guarded because it was so ugly and vulgar, had pretended that Rudolf had been kicked into a quarrel by Baltazzi, a brother of Baroness Vetsera, Mary's mother. A document has been recently uncovered from the most secret files of the Vienna State Records that has done away with all these tales. It is a memorandum by Count Hoyos, who is no longer alive, and who, being one of Rudolf's closest friends, had spent at Mayerling with the Archduke the evening of January 29, 1889, the last of the Prince's life. In his sworn state-

ment, Count Hoyos wrote that he and Prince Philip of Coburg, Rudolf's brother-in-law, had come to Mayerling in the afternoon of the twenty-ninth to shoot on the following day with their host; that they spent the evening together; and that, on the next morning, Coburg and he, and Rudolf's valet, Loschek, having waited for him in vain, finally decided to break in the door of his room, and found the couple stretched on the bed, shot through the head. The Hoyos statement, the veracity of which is undeniable (if it had been destined to hide something uglier, it would have been published), definitely disposes of a whole lot of cheap literature that has sprung up around the tragedy.

But, if we know at last how Rudolf died, we still do not know why he died. Those are things archives do not reveal. To my mind, if there is one case where a life explains a death, it is Rudolf's.

Two beings, the most different that could be found in the world, his father and his mother, had met in him and naturally had failed to blend there. Franz Joseph and Elisabeth had soon gone each his own way and ignored each other; but in Rudolf's frail being they were forced to live together, and the one never killed or eliminated the other. Undoubtedly, the various gifts of culture, vivacity, charm, independence of mind, which were so striking in Rudolf, gave the impression that he was a Wittelsbach led astray among the gloomy and matter-of-fact Habsburgs.

Elisabeth, his mother, had loved liberty for its own sake; she, the Empress of the most conservative Court of Europe, when obliged to choose between her duties and freedom, had chosen freedom; in a world which, under cover of gilded legends and formulæ, was in reality given over to the most sordid materialism, she remained a romantic; when she began to worship the anarchic spirit of Heinrich Heine, she simply proclaimed her own anarch-

ism. Elisabeth, who died, stabbed by a poor wretch who thought himself an anarchist, was indeed one of the rare authentic anarchists of two generations ago; she claimed liberty for herself, without caring in the least whether in teaching men freedom lay the only hope of assuaging the unrest of the people; she did not believe in any teaching; probably she did not believe in any progress; her imperial Austrian life had simply developed to the utmost in her her instinctive contempt for those weighty words rulers use with the nations: authority, order, morality, progress.

Endowed with the same temperament and turn of mind as his mother, Rudolf did not succeed in reaching her naked, logical and extreme conclusions. He derived from his father a religious respect for the mission of the Habsburgs in the world; he believed in the exaltedness of his station, whereas Elisabeth believed in no external or political grandeur. Loyal to his father's mission and supreme ideal, the glory and greatness of Austria, Rudolf, who had taken his father's measure, naïvely believed that it would suffice, in order to save the Empire, to do the opposite of what the Emperor did.

The Habsburg Court was strictly Catholic, in the narrow arid form Catholicism had taken in Austria. Of course, his teachers had educated him in this spirit. But his silent, ironical, pagan mother was there beside him; she probably never said a word, but her presence was enough to make the boy lose all respect—there could be no question of love—for the cold formulæ he had been taught mechanically.

The fall of the Empire has given us a chance of reading the remarks he wrote at fifteen in his secret note-books:

"The priests are guilty of this great crime: to have kept the people in abjection by means of superstitious practises

that enabled the sacerdotal classes, as well as the aristocracy, to deal with them as they wished."

And a little farther on:

"Are we higher spirits or animals? We are animals . . ."

And he goes on with a half-naïve, half-pedantic discussion, as to whether or not man comes down from the monkey. . . .

Such as he was at fifteen he remained until his death; thinking himself a liberal, he had become a pedant of liberalism; thinking he had freed himself from all blind subservience to form, he had only bowed to other forms, the artificiality of which his critical faculties were not sharp enough to detect. For instance, he was hostile to the overtures, very mild in truth, that the Prime Minister of his day, Count Taaffe, had made to the Slavs of the Empire; he was hostile to these, because he believed in the intellectual superiority, certainly undeniable, of the German middle class of the Liberal type; and because he was suspicious of the gross Catholicism of the Slav peasants; but, on the other hand, he was ready to give himself over entirely, and with no guarantees, to the Magyars, blind to the mortal danger the Monarchy might run from the continued oppression of the subject races by Magyarism. Furthermore, this friend of peace, who sometimes seemed like a belated pupil of Rousseau, held as a dogma that a war with Russia was inevitable for Austria,—and desirable. In all good faith—the same good faith with which an Englishman always sees progress and peace as synonymous with "English point of view"—he held that the Russian power must be brought low because it was a menace to freedom in Europe. In reality, he hated Russia instinctively because she was, even

more dangerously, an obstacle to a new imperial Austrian "mission" in the East, a mission of which he dreamed.

For, as soon as it was a question of immediate dangers for Austria, of the external dignity of Austria, the father's cold common sense made him see more clearly than the mother's whimsicality, which had, in him, turned to ideology. Thus, a little while after William II's accession to the throne of Germany, he wrote:

"He will cause Europe no end of trouble. He is narrow-minded, as refractory as a bull, and thinks he is the greatest genius on earth. In a few years he will plunge the Germany of the Hohenzollerns into the disaster she richly deserves."

It is irrefutably proved that the closest relations between Rudolf and the young and hitherto quite pure Mary Vetsera did not begin before January 13, 1889; two months earlier he did not even know her, although it would seem that the ardent young girl had, for a certain time, entertained a secret admiration for him. Death, then, came after only seventeen days of love, of a love crossed by a thousand obstacles, for Baroness Vetsera, Mary's mother, kept her under a supervision closer even than was then customary in Viennese society.

Indeed, the boundless love of the little Austrian girl, who through her mother had an Oriental strain in her, must have been exquisitely comforting to the Habsburg, who detested his wife, and with her nearly all his set, who was tormented with unrealizable political dreams, who had, for a certain time, kept on his writing-table a death's head and a pistol, and who, above all, had begun to perceive that all the dreams he had nourished, his self-heroizing dreams of predestination, were nothing but diseased imagination. . . . (In Constantinople, shortly after his marriage

to Stéphanie, in 1881, he had said to her: *"Hier wirst du Kaiserin sein!"*—Here you will be Empress.)

Mary was not, could not be, the passing love-affair that one enjoys and then discards. First of all, because she was pure, and Rudolf was no cynical Don Juan; and then, because she belonged to society. She was rather, for him, a happy pretext. . . . It is probable that on the night of the twenty-ninth she was mad with joy at the thought that he loved her enough to die for her (the letters she wrote on that night prove it); whereas he, in his romanticism, must have loved to think that he was at least giving her that illusion. . . .

Some one suggested that Rudolf was brought to suicide because of the discovery of a plot to give him the throne of Hungary, substituting for the personal union between Vienna and Budapest a simple dynastic union. He had imagined he might then, at the head of his Magyars, and helped by hypothetical allies, push toward the East and there carve out a new empire for himself,—and endow Austria with the new "mission."

How much truth was there in this? One thing do I hold from reliable sources, of Habsburg origin: that Rudolf had only one friend among all the members of the imperial family, and that friend was Archduke Johann Salvator, of the Tuscan branch. Both were defiant and independent spirits, with, in the second, a slight touch of sarcastic skepticism—he was not born in Florence in vain—that Rudolf lacked entirely.

Johann Salvator, by his vigorous criticisms of the conceptions of Archduke Albert, the Emperor's Supreme Councilor in army matters, had quite early acquired a reputation as military critic; he even published his criticisms in booklet form against the wishes of the Emperor. Later on, he was the first of a recent but long series of Habsburgs who sought

their wives among the lowest classes of the people. He had fallen in love with a little Milli Stubel, the daughter of lower middle-class people of Vienna; he went to the mother and said to her: "I am Archduke Johann Salvator; I love your daughter and wish to marry her." (And he did, a year after his cousin's suicide.)

The two unbalanced minds, unbalanced the one by temperament, the other by despair, discussed, during the long nights they spent together, the most extraordinary plans and dreams; it was most often probably nothing more than mental intoxication; but certainly no dynastic reverence stopped them. Did the walls have ears? If these conversations were reported to the Emperor, it is clear that the latter was neither morally nor intellectually apt to understand or to tolerate such mental acrobatics. To touch at his power or at his throne was the crime of crimes. After all, even cerebral France did not take lightly Caillaux's harmless "Rubicon."

Did an explanation take place between father and son during the very days that were brightened by Mary Vetsera's burning love? Those who have known the actors of the tragedy a little better than the many who wrote about it are inclined to believe that if violent scene there was, politics, the iron family discipline, were the sole theme of it, not Rudolf's love. It would have been impossible for the Emperor to understand that love-affairs may be very serious things.

Rudolf was not exclusively enough Elisabeth's son to put himself above all exterior manifestations of violence; he was also the son of his father; and consequently he feared him, and he was, in spite of himself, imbued with the reverence all the Habsburgs—except perhaps Johann Salvator—entertained for the unbending Head of the Family. He lost his head where his mother would not even have deigned to notice.

Mary Vetsera, too proud in her love to think of any possibilities of marriage, had begun to harp on the romantic *Liebestod* motive with him—and the call came as a solution to the unhappy man.

Because he had a rich and generous nature, his suicide was, after all, but symbolical of what his life would have been, had it lasted longer; all his plans, all his remedies, would have remained as mere dreams, schemes.

He wished to be liberal and radical; and he was so, sincerely; but he also believed that he would thus better have served the historic mission he still thought his family to be entrusted with. Indeed, no Habsburg since Charles V had entertained dreams more gigantic or more disappointing. It is of this inner moral conflict that he was doomed to die, physically or morally.

Franz Joseph muttered, when the news from Mayerling was imparted to him: "He has died like a butcher's boy."

Yes, seemingly. But the real tragedy lay in the reasons for his suicide.

## IV

### Archduke Franz Ferdinand, The Man Who Might Have Saved Austria

IF RUDOLF of Habsburg was probably a Freemason, and certainly an anti-Catholic of the Voltairian type, Franz Ferdinand, the Emperor's nephew, who became his heir after the tragedy of 1889, came forth—I have already said—as a determined champion of the narrow bigotry that, in Austria, went under the name of religion.

All the writers who have tried their hand at his enigmatic portrait repeat the fact as an axiomatic and unchallengeable truth. And although I have known him myself in his lifetime—and I am not so sure that many of his biographers have—I might go on repeating the same formula. Only, I had felt that the man was more complex than he seemed. And when I heard friends of the youngster—his equals—call him Franzi, I realized once more that absolute assertions are simply assertions hiding part of the truth. They told me of an unknown Franz Ferdinand: an open-minded and gay young man, with all the short-comings, but also all the advantages, of one who read little; and who, when speaking of religious problems, used to define beliefs simply as social and political necessities; on the whole, a rather indifferent spirit, with nothing of the morbid anti-clerical violence that characterized the cousin, Rudolf,—which is also a form of clerical furor.

Rudolf made a show of staying away from Mass deliberately, whenever he happened to be in a small town of the Empire on a Sunday, and somewhat naïvely rejoiced

in the scandal he was causing. Franz Ferdinand, less "intellectual" and, at any rate at that time, less morbid, avoided lengthy religious services, but always tried not to make it a subject of criticism.

If, unlike his cousin, he read little or not at all, his naturally witty turn of mind often tried itself on the Austrian clergy and on its Jesuitic *distinguos*.

The intimate friends who gave me these details, and who had known in him a Habsburg of the type that did not fall into the hands of a father confessor, discovered, to their great amazement, another man soon after his marriage. The royal person who was most struck by this change thought for an instant that it was but a masterpiece of deceit in a man who had every right to think himself on the eve of becoming the Emperor of Catholic Austria.

"I was soon compelled to realize," this same person was telling me, "that I was not confronted by Molière's Tartuffe; it was a real transformation, the work of his wife; all the same, all the same . . ." my interlocutor added, as if she wondered whether in his deepest self some glimmerings of the old tolerance might not come up again some day.

The instrument of his deliberate adoption of the narrowest form of Catholicism, was Countess Sophie Chotek, whom he married morganatically when he was already thirty-six years old, in 1900, after a long struggle with the Emperor, who during several months refused his consent even to a morganatic union.

I have often heard tell in Hungary, by eye-witnesses, the comical story of the hopes first, and then of the rage, the Archduke Frederick and especially his wife, the Archduchess Isabelle, had felt when they had seen the man who was one day to become the Emperor come to their house so often; they had been convinced he came for one of their daughters, and had then discovered, to their archducal indignation,

that he had been attracted solely by the little Chotek, whom they had taken at their Court as a lady-in-waiting. "That is how this scheming girl is rewarding us, with her Slav deceit, for our kindness!" the pompous Archduchess went on shrieking for months.

Did Sophie Chotek love Franz Ferdinand at first? Certainly she very soon was flattered by his attentions. And she subsequently proved her admirable devotion to him; if she died at his side at Sarajevo, after fourteen years of happy married life, it is because she saw the hour of mortal danger draw near and refused to leave him for a moment. But lack of real love at the beginning, or wounded pride at the thought of a simple morganatic marriage,—the Chotek were not listed as a family liable to marry into reigning families, but were yet of too ancient lineage to look favorably, impoverished as they were, on one of those morganatic unions that, in the old Germanic world, were used to legitimate royalty *liaisons* with actresses,—the fact remains that Sophie Chotek, at the time when her engagement was being decided, was telling a friend, whose authentic and secret testimony is to me beyond suspicion: "If I marry him it is because I must save his soul."

There is no doubt either that the ecclesiastical authorities, to begin with the girl's confessor, a Jesuit, brought the strongest pressure to bear on her when she hesitated, appealing to her intense religious fervor, and enjoining her to render this great service to the Church.

Her narrow pietism increased with what she felt to be her responsibility—to God—as wife of the heir to the throne. Even faithful old servants and game-keepers in castles where she was raised to be the mistress, sometimes learned by a curt dismissal how great a crime it was to be a Calvinist—if they were Hungarians—or sometimes to forget to go to Mass. But at the same time, Franz Ferdinand,

after his marriage, initiated cordial and even friendly relations with Orthodox prelates of Transylvania, or with influential Slovaks of the Lutheran Church; they were enemies of Magyar hegemony, which he himself hated, and which was to him sufficient reason for friendship with them. When he imposed—there is no other word—on the Emperor the appointment of Conrad von Hötzendorf as Chief of the General Staff, he knew quite well that Conrad was an unbeliever, but he did not mind at all. True that Conrad, in his memoirs, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit,* tells a story of how Franz Ferdinand, during maneuvers, took him violently to task one fine Sunday because everybody had noticed he had not gone to church. "I know what you think about religion," shouted the Archduke; "but if I go to church, you also must go!"

The outburst scandalized at the time those few who had not quite forgotten the mild skepticism of the Liberal middle classes of yore. I own that when the incident was repeated to me—and also when I read it in Conrad's book—it made quite a different impression on me; I felt in it an avowal of political necessity that does not conflict with religion perhaps, but that is certainly far from its essence.

Furthermore, as soon as some measures struck him as being useful to his plans for the changing of the monarchy into the sort of gigantic federalism he was thinking of, Franz Ferdinand did not hesitate a moment in patronizing reforms that were looked upon with suspicion by the Roman Church: such, for instance, as the steps taken toward universal suffrage in Hungary. He did not even hesitate, to the great displeasure of the Vatican, to ally himself with the Socialists in order to overcome certain obstacles through their means.

He fought, of course, the *Los von Rom* movement, but it is evidence itself that what he detested in it, not unreason-

ably from his point of view, was its potential disloyalty to imperial Vienna and its leaning toward Protestant Berlin. He deeply disliked the Jews and showed it even more than was wise in his situation (and a great deal of the *mauvaise presse* he had, even after his death, is probably due to this); but there was in his hatred no trace of the old Catholic intolerance that gave rise to Ghetti and autos da fé. I do not think I am wrong in asserting that what he hated in the Jews was the astounding ease with which they Magyarized themselves, and the power they lent Budapest under their assumed Magyar names. Had there been pogroms in the capital of Hungary, he might perhaps have disliked the Jews far less.

However, there is no doubt that what there was in him of moral and spiritual life very naturally expressed itself within the frame of his religious tenets. He was a true Habsburg, not a sort of charming intellectual mongrel as the Voltairian Rudolf had been. After the tragedy of the war that unloosened the tongues even of courtiers, I have heard intimates of the Belvedere—the Vienna palace that became his residence as Crown Prince, and that often seemed a rival of Schönbrunn where Franz Joseph lived—put forth a hypothesis that undoubtedly has a parcel of truth in it. Franz Ferdinand stood—out of honor, but also out of instinctive religious inheritance—in deep awe of the terrible oath he had, on the eve of his marriage, in June, 1900, sworn to the Emperor, solemnly surrounded by his Court, namely: to forego for ever on behalf of all the children he might have from his wife, all right of succession to the throne, and even all prerogatives of Habsburg rank. But by this very marriage he had estranged himself from all the other archdukes; he had come to detest more and more the Emperor, of whom he said in 1913 that he was like an usufructuary who squanders the substance he should ac-

count for to the young heir, powerless witness of the bad administration of his property. His life centered more and more exclusively round his wife and children; he was absolutely convinced that only a radical transformation of Austria, including a suppression of Dualism which was the basis of its government since 1867, might save the life of the State. His wife had resented, as women can, the mean pinpricks the archduchesses and the Court Marshal, Prince Montenuovo, inflicted on her unceasingly. And he had resented them with her. What more human than that he should sometimes have thought that, among all the changes he would make on his accession to the throne, he would ask the Pope to free him from his oath, that thus he might insure the imperial succession to his eldest son, throwing overboard not only the hated Hungarian Constitution, but, while he was about it, the Family Law of the Habsburgs as well?

At the Vatican, however, in spite of the pietism of the Duchess of Hohenberg, the title that Sophie Chotek had finally obtained from Franz Joseph, they were not so sure, I shall not say of the religious manifestations of the heir to the throne, but of his schemes of political reforms. They had already had too much to fear from the plans of the other heir, Rudolf, whose disappearance had been witnessed with a sigh of relief. At the Vatican all reform is always looked upon with suspicious eyes; the *status quos* à la Franz Joseph are less disturbing there.

If Sophie Chotek unconsciously wove around her husband a legendary reputation for religious intolerance that is perhaps unfair, Franz Ferdinand's military favorite, Conrad, did the same thing in the field of peace and war.

There is no doubt that many official acts and utterances of Franz Ferdinand may be quoted as proofs of a tendency, at least, toward warlike solutions. On November 23, 1912,

as we have learned since the war from the German and Austrian diplomatic documents, the Archduke tried to persuade William II of the urgent necessity of an "extremely strong action" against the Serbs.

In February, 1914, the Chief of the Austrian General Staff, rightly considered as a man who owed his post to the sole will of the Crown Prince, writes to his German colleague, General von Moltke, that he believes in an imminent European catastrophe, and pointing to the fact that France and Russia "are not yet ready," asks: "Why are we waiting?"

Pages might be filled with expressions of the kind, written or said by Conrad. No wonder they were all considered as the echo of the secret thoughts of his protector, the Archduke.

And yet it seems more and more evident that it was, at best, a question of the combined attitudes of a diplomatic game—as dangerous as you please—but that the ultimate thoughts of him who might rightly consider himself as the Austrian *Kriegsherr* of to-morrow lay elsewhere. In his otherwise rather dull autobiography Conrad has these enlightening lines: "On all the numerous occasions I discussed with the Archduke the need of a decisive action against Serbia, he listened to me intently; but never did I succeed in feeling definitely that he, in his heart, wanted the war as I wanted it. He would examine with me all that was needed to prepare the war, he would even discuss executory details; but I would feel that he did not like the prospect of it."

He could not like it; for even a victorious war would, in its psychological consequences, have been contrary to the essential aim of his political conception. What he sought was to reconcile with one another, by absolute fairness of treatment, all the peoples with their nine languages that

constituted his Empire, and to do away with the 1867 compromise which had established two privileged people, the German in Austria, and the Magyar in Hungary. What Franz Joseph at eighty was incapable of facing—and he would probably have been incapable of it all his life—Franz Ferdinand was determined to accomplish within six months of his accession to the throne: to break up "the nationalistic megalomania of the Magyars on the one hand and, on the other, the incapacity of the Austrian bureaucracy, to transform the centralized unit state into a union of national democracies in which Germans and Slavs were equal partners"—to use the words of the Austrian historian, Redlich, a just, but not uncharitable critic of Austria's errors.

Such was his program, his concrete and immediate program; and I have not said at random that he had six months to put it into execution. Indeed, unless he had acted before, at the end of the six months from his accession to the throne he would have been obliged to go through the mystic ceremonies of the Hungarian coronation and of its solemn oaths; and although sovereigns often make out a special moral code for themselves about these oaths, he preferred to spare himself that ordeal, and to impose freely a new order on the Hungarians from the beginning.

With all that was unbalanced in his temperament—especially his outbursts of ungovernable temper—Franz Ferdinand had of statesmanship the two main traits: to go once to the essence of any problem, and not, like his uncle, to look only to the details; to see clearly the goal to reach, to limit it to practical possibilities, while not excluding further and broader developments that a statesman, however prudently, leaves to the future, while the utopian thinks he may realize them at once.

A remote, but essential, part of Franz Ferdinand's plan

inevitably eliminated all idea of war and the hatreds and the grudges war engenders. For, not only did he aim at the unification of the Yugo-Slavs of the Monarchy, changing its character from Dualism to Trialism, but he also considered the possibility of ceding Transylvania to the Rumanian Kingdom, while at the same time admitting widened Rumania in a strict federal union with Monarchy, making of it, practically speaking, what Bavaria was to the German Empire of 1870. And he even told himself more than once that, in this Austria changed into a gigantic union of free national states linked together by a common allegiance to the supreme Habsburg Lord, room might also have been found some day for small Balkanic Serbia, whose inhabitants would have envied the freedom and well-being of their brothers beyond the borders, granted of course these felt themselves free and happy.

That the Archduke's thoughts went as far as this I hold not from one of his friends, but from a witness of the opposite camp, the old Serbian leader, Pachich. In his exile at Corfu, where we shared, during the war, the occasional diversion of Austrian bombardments, he several times told me that only once did he tremble for the future of his country: when he finally caught the secret thought of the Archduke.

Although hatred is inconsistent with statesmanship, one can understand why Franz Ferdinand, convinced that his plan might not only save Austria, but make her greater and more supple than Hohenzollern Germany, felt such a violent and constant antipathy for the Magyars, whom he considered as the principal obstacle to the realization of his plans.

He nourished an aversion but little less vivid against the Italians. This has been attributed to his family and clerical prejudices. Were we not the bad Catholics who had robbed the Pope of his States? All things considered, I am inclined

to believe that his main grudge against us lay in that he realized how difficult it would be to include the Italians of Trieste, of Istria and of Trentino in this plan of free and satisfied loyalty which he dreamed of for all his future subjects. The Magyars he could bring under: they were so few; the Slavs would have found in his Federal Empire all they wished for, then, in their most ambitious dreams. But could he prevent the Italians of Trieste and Istria from looking with envy toward the free independent democracy of forty million men in existence beside them?

His aversion for us was almost flattering, after all. That is why I never succeeded in resenting the manifest expression of this antipathy which he condescended to extend to me the couple of times he met me at shooting-parties he had invited himself to and where I was among the guests. He was polite, absolutely polite; but, to the great terror of the host who knew that the Archduke spoke Italian as fluently as I did, he always affected to speak to me in French. "Court favor" having always left me cold, I could judge the man all the more at my ease, and in that atmosphere of outlived officials in Austria, and of fantastic schemers in Hungary, he struck me as being the only one endowed with a clear-sighted will and with both his feet on reality.

The only feverish spot on this sound will-power was the growing fixed idea that the time for him to carry out his plans was measured. A few months after my second and last meeting with him, he was, in 1913, at Blankenberghe, on the Belgian coast, staying with the King and Queen of the Belgians, for whom he had an old sympathy. They were talking of his future:

"Oh, my reign will be so short." . . .

During his last journey to the Dalmatian coasts, where a marksman can hide so easily along the numerous narrow

and steep channels, he was grazed by a bullet. The aide-de-camp begged him not to make a living target of himself by standing on the parapet. And he answered:

"Kismet! My bullet has already been cast." . . .

However, contrary to what all his biographers have said about his obstinacy in going to Bosnia in June, 1914, for the maneuvers in spite of the many warnings that had reached him, I can guarantee the absolute veracity of what follows.

At first, the warnings had left him cold; he could not understand why the Austrian officials he despised, emphasized to such an extent the danger of his going to Sarajevo on St. Vitus's Day, the anniversary sacred to Serbian patriotism, as it commemorates the battle of Kossovo, of fourteenth-century memory. Why, he must have thought, since my principal aim is to put my Slavs on an equal footing with their present masters, the Magyars?

But in the end he thought it better to be prudent. He hated the idea of passing away before his uncle. Certain that his personal courage would not be suspected, he went to him and, in his blunt way, announced:

"It smells of organized murder down there."

To which the Emperor answered:

"Now it is too late; it is difficult for you not to go."

He went; pride conquered prudence before this old man whom he so deeply disliked. He could not lower himself to argue.

On the appointed day, Sunday, June twenty-eighth, he entered Sarajevo with his wife for his official visit. He was proceeding to the Municipal Palace when a bomb was thrown on his car, wounding an officer and a few spectators. When the Archduke alighted at the door of the Municipal Palace and saw the Mayor bow, ready to begin his speech, he fulminated these words at him:

"Sir, I come here as a visitor and I get bombs. It is scandalous. Now you may speak."

Count Sforza and his children

After the visit, he insisted on going to the military hospital to see the wounded officer. His wife, who clung to him all the time, went with him.

After scarcely a few minutes' drive, a young man on the pavement fired at the Archduke with his revolver. Franz Ferdinand was already mortally wounded when his wife got up to protect him with her body. Another shot hit her, and she fell dead before the Archduke, who expired fifteen minutes after.

The murderer, the Bosnian, Gavrilo Princip, was the son of an agent of the Austrian secret police service, which explains why he had not been watched by the police.

For the first time since her marriage, Sophie had received royal honors in Bosnia. It was the Emperor's last gift after his tragic conversation with his nephew.

True that the Court atmosphere took its revenge again: by Prince Montenuovo's order the two coffins, at the funeral held at the Hofburg Chapel in Vienna, were placed on two different levels; and on Sophie's coffin a pair of white gloves and a fan were laid—the insignia of her former rank as lady-in-waiting.

The archduchesses very much enjoyed the pointed reminder.

# V

## Aehrenthal, The Last Servant

IN EUROPE, even in the days of the Austrian successes at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, everybody agreed that there was no Austrian nation. It is not in vain that the nineteenth century was the century of nationalities, of Italian unity, of German unity. Austria, that is to say, Higher and Lower Austria, her magnificent capital, Vienna, Styria, Tyrol, were, are and always will be—*Anschluss* or no *Anschluss*—parts of Germany and their inhabitants, Germans.

But if there was no Austria, there were some Austrians,—Austrians who were solely Austrians, and who, although German-speaking, had nothing German about them. They were the members of an aristocratic caste, chosen throughout the centuries by the Habsburgs, among all the noble families of Europe, who were only too glad to give their youngest sons to the Empire, to earn new fiefs. Their descendants lived exclusively on imperial favors and by serving the Empire. They spoke German among themselves; but neither psychologically nor intellectually were they German; they were the only existing Austrians. To them, the hereditary civilian "general staff" of the Emperor, German was nothing but a common Court language. Most of them were Czechs; but they also numbered Poles, Italians, Croats and Frenchmen—mainly from Burgundy; the most famous of all being Prince Eugène of Savoy.

Not only were the Czechs the most numerous in this

Austrian aristocracy, they were also its most combative element. There was a reason for this: Poles, Italians and Hungarians had been uprooted from their traditions and transplanted to Vienna which they left only to serve the Empire in the army or in the diplomatic service. To the Austrian aristocracy settled among the Czechs, above the Czechs, the task of denationalizing Bohemia had been entrusted. The youngest sons of noble families of Europe, adventurers from Flanders and Hungary who had hired themselves out to the Empire, had received fiefs in Bohemia on two conditions: not only fidelity to Vienna like all the others who had flocked to serve the Empire, but also suppression of all efforts at a Slav resurrection.

It was from this stock, it was imbued with these traditions, that Aloys Lexa von Aehrenthal was born on the twenty-seventh of September, 1854, the son of Baron Jean-Baptiste Lexa von Aehrenthal and his wife, Countess Marie von Thun-Hohenstein. The father was for a long time the leader of the German landed gentry in Bohemia, that is, one of the most ardent and zealous defenders of the German supremacy over those Czechs, some of whom were then beginning to lift their heads again and to remember, after centuries of lethargy, that they had a language and national traditions of their own.

The Aehrenthals were of small nobility; they even had some Jewish blood in their veins. But the mother of the one who was to be the last great servant of the Habsburgs' imperial traditions was a Thun, one of the most illustrious families of the Austrian aristocracy.

A lasting impression was made on young Aloys Aehrenthal's mind, when he was twelve years old, at an age when impressions become indelible for life, by what he himself saw and heard in Bohemia in 1866,—in his own land of Bohemia where Austria suffered the first great humiliation

and defeat inflicted on her at the hands of other members of the Germanic world. Aehrenthal himself admitted to me—for as much as his reserved nature could disclose itself at all—how great an influence those feelings of childhood had exerted on his life. Austria defeated, defeated in Bohemia, defeated by a Germanic power that succeeded in ousting the Emperor from the Confederation, all this seemed to his parents and to him more than a catastrophe: a series of blasphemies.

Six years later, after a few months spent at the University of Bonn, where he learned nothing, he was admitted into the diplomatic service and sent to the Paris Embassy where he remained a few years. He was too young and too full of prejudices which he had not yet been able to gage at their right value, to make anything at all of the seemingly disordered life and the endless discussions that were prevalent in the then reviving French democracy. One day when I was telling him of the unforgettable impression left on me by the years I had spent in Paris as a young attaché to the Italian Embassy, because I had, at the time, witnessed the origin of the great moral crisis, the *Affaire Dreyfus,* he only answered, in his level tone of voice: "You were lucky; all my memories of Paris are memories of boredom."

This only proved that he had seen nothing of Paris but dinner parties at Embassies or at houses of the Faubourg St. Germain. Probably, for him, a young man of small nobility, it would have been impossible to alter those habits of blue-blooded exclusiveness that were so deeply anchored in all Austrian Embassies, and which so increased, in Rome, for instance, the difficulties, already great in themselves, of explaining Austrian points of view and Austrian reasons.

The two other diplomatic posts he filled before he became ambassador were not only useless to Aehrenthal but

even did him harm. For in St. Petersburg he learned only to fear and to despise, and in Budapest to despise without fear. Sent again to St. Petersburg as an ambassador in 1899, he there awaited his inevitable summons to power. The instructions and the policy of his chief in the Ballplatzhaus, Count Goluchowski, served only as a whetstone for his criticisms and his sarcasms.

I myself—then a young diplomat, and busier, I own, playing polo and studying Oriental art than weighing the leading factors of a European policy that seemed naught to me but artificial play—often heard the old men I could not avoid meeting, like Visconti-Venosta and the Von Bülows, speak of the jovial and skeptical Pole as of some one who did not deserve to be considered a "statesman." All things considered, and in the light of subsequent events, I am not so sure they were right.

Goluchowski's policy was always based on these main ideas: that moderation had become for Austria the ablest and safest policy: that by giving up ideas of conquest she would oblige others to desist from them; that she would thus acquire a sort of moral prestige which would increase her real power. Actually, the only fault in Goluchowski's policy was that it was too wise and too "European"—I shall not say for the Emperor whose only ambition now was to "carry on," but for the leading circles of the aristocracy, especially for the Magyars who despised the Slav in Goluchowski and blamed him for not having taken advantage of Russia's difficulties in Manchuria and Korea, or of the revolutionary troubles that followed in Russia after the Japanese victories, to earn new successes for Austria, like those she had won at the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

When the strictures of the *Massgebende Kreisen* (ruling circles) became sharper and more general, the Emperor naturally sacrificed his Goluchowski. Indeed, the custom—

I heard it from Goluchowski himself at a dinner party in Paris years later—ran in his family. His father before him had been dismissed by the same Emperor, in the same summary way, in 1861, when he entered his study one fine morning and found on his writing-table a letter of resignation that only awaited his own signature.

Married to a Szechenyi, one of the big names of Hungary (even after he had, once in power, proved a far greater man than was commonly supposed, he never got rid of the inferiority complex caused in him by his wife's blood), Aehrenthal was from the beginning hailed as their man by the anti-Slav coterie—especially by the Hungarians—which represented the greatest power after the Emperor in the complicated system of Austrian equilibrium.

The political career of statesmen—even in the rare cases of those who have an inborn contempt for cheap popularity—divides itself into two periods: in the first of which they do what they can; and in the second of which they try to bend events to their will.

The German-Magyar, Aehrenthal, called on to succeed the Slav, Goluchowski, could not pick and choose when, with the Young Turkish Revolution of the summer of 1908, all the partizans of a mailed-fist policy in Austria thought that the time had come definitely to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina over which Austria had, since 1878, a right of administration. It is therefore quite useless either to blame or to praise Aehrenthal for what was really a case of *force majeure;* as it was for Giolitti three years later, when he occupied Lybia. There are moments when, by proving that such and such a political move is wrong, one has proved nothing at all.

Nowadays, the history of the annexation of Bosnia seems like an episode of ancient history. The only thing that is still a living problem is the contribution these

chronicles might bring to the study of the causes of the World War. From this point of view only is the episode still interesting—in a way almost symbolical. For to Austrian responsibility corresponds Russian responsibility. Aehrenthal was then accused, within the Entente, of foul play, of deceit, at the least of Machiavellism, in the cheap sense European hypocrisy has given to this word. Courts and chancellories remembered a definition given of Aehrenthal by Edward VII: "that slippery man." . . . In truth, it was no fault of Aehrenthal if the Russian Imperialists played into his hands with their dreams. Complicated lies were concocted on all sides after the *fait accompli;* but if the annexation of Bosnia was the first grave element of disturbance in the Europe of the "armed peace," Izvolsky was eagerly working at the same time to secure a free passage for Russian war-ships from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean through the Straits, which would have been just as serious a factor of unrest. Izvolsky himself, in July, 1908, three months before the annexation of Bosnia, offered to Aehrenthal his approval of the annexation in return for the latter's acceptance of the Russian plans. Izvolsky even went as far as to say that he would not make any objection to an annexation of the Sandjak of Novibazar, which would have been a far greater blow to Serbia, and which Russia used, while pretending to protect her.

After that, it matters little which one of the two lied when they met on the fifteenth of September, 1908, at Buchlau, the castle of Count Berchtold, then Austrian Ambassador to Russia. Everybody, probably, was inaccurate and reticent: Izvolsky because it ran in his blood, and Aehrenthal because all he had learned from his embassy to St. Petersburg was contempt for the Russian *chin;* and to speak the truth is also, after all, a token of respect.

Any one of the "statesmen" who succeeded one another

for so many years in the service of Franz Joseph, might have accomplished all this. But Aehrenthal developed a personality and showed a dignity no one suspected him of, so gray, so dull had his diplomatic career been until then, when he willed the consecutive phases of the Bosnian crisis and of the Austrian policy to be stamped with a distinctive Austrian conception—and an active, not a passive one. It was the first time this had happened since 1866. Even Andrassy in Berlin, in spite of his pompous ways, had done nothing but play into Bismarck's hands.

Aehrenthal was the first to want to be independent of Berlin. He resolved that old Austria, for which, as a child, his heart had beat with pride at the very moment she was being humbled by Prussia, should once more treat, at least as an equal, with the newcomers. It would be a mistake to see in this a form of Austrian patriotism as one understands patriotism in a national state. It was, indeed, with him, patriotism, but a patriotism made up of a traditional loyalty to the Habsburg Monarchy, and also—at least, such was my own feeling—of personal dignity, of a sense of a personal worth which he knew to be greater than that of the other Austrians and also of the big German personalities of his day.

It may be that if during his youth and early manhood he had seen and learned to understand centers like London or Washington, for instance, where throbs the heart of great democracies, he, by loftiness of mind, would have come to the same conclusions that his predecessor, Goluchowski, had drawn from innate common sense: that Austria could no longer indulge in any other program than that of living,—unless she undertook a radical transformation such as the old Franz Joseph would never have understood or countenanced. But diplomacy and Court life had never suggested to Aehrenthal's youth that certain ideas are

forces that laugh at the material strength of empires—and he imagined he might go against the stream of history. If it was a mistake, the mistake was not devoid of grandeur.

But his claim to greatness lies in the loyal effort he made—the first of its kind in the history of Franz Joseph's reign—to build up a sincere understanding between his country and Italy. If, notwithstanding the difference in age and official position, he imparted to me admissions and confidences in which he very rarely indulged, it is because he had felt in me certain ideas analogous to his own in our dealings as Allies with Germany.

The only two occasions on which I had been able to busy myself with politics in Rome, during short stays I made there on my return from my beloved Orient, were in 1906, when I was *chef de cabinet* to Count Guicciardini, and in 1910, when I held the same post with another Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Marquis di San Giuliano. Like all responsible Italians I was a loyal partizan of the Triple Alliance: the Triple Alliance was not perfection, but it secured peace; that was enough. For that matter, even in France, at that time, they would have thought twice about it, whatever they might say, before doing anything at all—had it been in their power—to sever Italy from Vienna and Berlin. In France also it was felt that the Triple Alliance meant peace.

But whereas old traditions and hereditary feelings kept up among the masses in Italy a suspicious dislike of Austria, what really hurt and irritated the few who knew and saw came from Berlin, not from Vienna.[1] We could not change

[1]In April, 1907, back in Rome from the Algesiras Conference, where for the first time I had felt the shadow of the war over Europe, the German Government was so dissatisfied with the independent attitude the Italian Delegate, Visconti-Venosta, had shown there, that the language of the German Ambassador to Italy became at times—in private conversations, it is true—almost insolent. His attitude contrasted strikingly with that of his Austrian colleague, who, like everybody in Austria, beginning with Golu-

Austria; Austria was what she was, and we had to take her as she stood if we wanted peace in Europe. But what to me and to others seemed intolerable and galling, was that Berlin always strove to eliminate frictions and misunderstandings between Italy and Austria, but only up to a certain point. Berlin wanted sufficient discord to be able to threaten Rome with Vienna and Vienna with Rome. It was in vain that the actors changed on the German stage; the instinctive rule remained—whether it was Monts who applied it in Rome, or Jagow; whether Von Bülow commanded in Berlin, or Kiderlen or Schön. (I shall not mention Bethmann-Hollweg, for he had a special gift for shutting his eyes to whatever was abhorrent to his naturally honest but weak nature.)

The episode that illustrated Aehrenthal's loyalty to Italy most strikingly is well known: toward the end of 1911, Italy being wholly engaged upon the war with Turkey in Lybia, and the most important part of the Italian Army and of Italian war material being in Africa, the Chief of the Austrian General Staff, Conrad von Hötzendorf, urged the immediate decision of a war against Italy. Conrad's campaign, in order to win over the government and public opinion to his coup, had indeed been going on for several months. With a skilfulness that would have been no match for Pascal's own Jesuits, Conrad had drawn up a set of

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chowski and the Emperor himself, had been rather annoyed by the "loyalty" patently given to Austria by William II in one of his resounding telegrams, when he defined Austria as "our brilliant second on the dueling field."

I told Guicciardini that I knew of an unfailing remedy; and immediately wrote the draft of a confidential letter that the King of Italy was to have sent, written entirely in his own hand, to the German Emperor, to ask him, in the name of this "loyalty" to which the Hohenzollern constantly and monopolically referred, that his Ambassador, Count Monts, be immediately recalled. I read it to old Visconti-Venosta and to Guicciardini and told them that I considered the letter a service rendered to the solidity of the Triple Alliance. Both warmly approved, and Guicciardini said, on pocketing my draft, that he would submit it at once to the King. Unfortunately, he began by showing it to Prime Minister Sonnino who dissuaded him from attaching any importance to Monts' words.

"proofs" to show that his war was really defensive, since Italy was inevitably bound some day to find herself against Austria. In private conversations, Conrad's language was more direct. He even went as far as to say, in the presence of a German officer who showed no astonishment: "We were fools not to fall upon Italy at the time of the Messine earthquake; this is the second opportunity God sends us; and woe betide us if we do not take it."

Aehrenthal never concealed his opinion one moment. He said from the beginning that he would never countenance a "highwayman policy"; and he repeated these words to any one, in whatever position he might be, who tried to influence him in favor of Conrad's plans. Franz Joseph had never been accustomed to such clear statements. And at the end of 1911 he definitely put himself on Aehrenthal's side. Conrad was invited to tender his resignation. The fact that the unpleasant communication was, contrary to custom, made to Conrad by the Emperor himself during an audience granted to the General on November thirtieth gives one the right to conclude that the essential merit of this act of will and of loyalty rests with Aehrenthal more than with the Sovereign. Besides, after the death of Aehrenthal in 1912, Conrad was reappointed chief of the general staff.

One initiative could the Italians impute to Aehrenthal as one inspired by mistrust of our country: the increase of the Austrian Navy in 1910. They were wrong, in Italy. But we were so far from imagining that Great Powers might be mad enough to start a war, or to stumble into it, that no one among us realized, then, that the increase of the naval armaments had been decided in Vienna—and agreed upon with great ill-will by Aehrenthal, after endless pressure had been put upon him by Berlin—to increase the potential naval forces against England.

In 1910 and '11, I had a series of private conversations with Aehrenthal. Being a young and inconspicuous diplomat, personally rather popular in Austrian society, I had been entrusted in Rome with the mission of telling the Austrian Minister some bitter truths. I myself relied on the cogency of truth, and was not afraid of my mission. I went through all the grievances: Franz Joseph's unpaid visit of restitution to the King of Italy, the naval armaments, the question of the Italian University, the pin-prick policy against Austria's Italian subjects. All these were questions that our Ambassador, Duke Avarna, could not have discussed; coming from an ambassador, it would have looked much too serious.

In the study of a common friend near Vienna, and sometimes even at the Nemzeti Casino at Budapest, free language was permissible. To me it was a cause of joy to note that Aehrenthal was first suspicious and irritated; next interested; then sympathetic. As these facts are already a part of history, and as what counts most in diplomatic incidents—which lose their interest so soon—is the human element, I shall only quote two passages here, just as I put them down in a private note-book immediately after one of our conversations:

"How can one make you feel that we are embarrassed by the complaints and the 'wails of anguish' (and I made it clear to my interlocutor that I was quoting the famous *grido di dolore* of 1859) that reach us from Italians in Austria? You can not expect us to remain indifferent to your efforts at denationalizing the Italians. Italy has risen from the dead in virtue of the law of nationalities. But if your Italians could be proud and happy to be Italians, and at the same time glad of being Austrian subjects, just as Italians of Tessin are proud to be Italian and are yet loyal Swiss, we should, indeed, be very pleased. Kill Irredentism by satisfying them—and we shall all be the better off. I believe

in influences greater than those of territorial aggrandizement."

Aehrenthal, who had already felt that I shared his most intimate thought—friendship with Berlin, but not vassalage—was silent for a few moments, then answered:

"I believe you, I not only believe in your sincerity, but also in the objective truth of what you say. But were I to repeat your words and to admit that I believe them, I should be taken for a madman here."

As I was appointed minister to China a little later, I did not see Aehrenthal again, for he died on February 17, 1912. A few hours before his death he received an autograph letter from the Emperor, accepting his resignation, and conferring upon him the brilliants of the Grand Crown of the Order of St. Stephen. Even had he not been face to face with death, Aehrenthal was too stoical and too haughty not to be above these compliments. Before Aehrenthal had passed away, the Emperor appointed Count Berchtold, whose name is for ever associated with the ultimatum to Serbia, whence sprang the World War.

A year later, back in Europe on leave, being in Austria for a number of shooting-parties, I told the Austrian friend at whose house I had held the conversations with Aehrenthal, my grief for the loss of the man and the fears it had roused in me,—and my surprise that Berchtold should have succeeded a man of Aehrenthal's character.

"What else can you expect?" answered the Austrian, who generally hid his bitter sarcasms as far too dangerous a weapon to exhibit in Vienna. "With us, one count must succeed another count, and everything is all the more in the order of things that this one has a purer genealogical tree behind him than Aehrenthal. It was high time, they thought at Court, that a real *Hochgeborene* should come to power. . . ."

## VI

### Tisza, The Magyar

TILL ten years ago, the aristocratic oases in Europe were two: Austria and Hungary. In Germany, for all the smart regiments, for all the pride of the Prussian Junkers, the structure of the State was already a middle-class organization, lacking only the advantages of a middle-class régime, because of the general servile admiration for an imperial ruler whose limitations were guessed more by the aristocrats—who knew better how to take his measure—than by the middle classes, blinded by the intellectual slavery of the Bismarckian period.

War has destroyed one of the two aristocratic régimes: Austria.

In Hungary, the aristocratic caste still struggles for supremacy and until now with a semblance of success. Most of the Hungarian questions which are at present keeping the diplomats busy in Europe are merely expressions of the will to power of the old aristocratic families.

Nationalistic feelings have helped to destroy the aristocracies in most of the lands which have constituted the new European States after the victory of the Entente. Among many subject races—the Czech, the Rumanian, the Serbo-Croat nationalities—the landed aristocracy was not patriotic; the aristocrats often belonged to the nationality of the conquerors, rather than to the nationality of the conquered. It was especially so in Czechoslovakia. In Croatia some of the titled landowners were of Slavonic origin, but in social affiliations they considered themselves

Austro-Germans, or, to use a phrase of the old Austrian slang, *gelb und schwarz*—yellow and black, from the colors of the Empire banner. Both sorts were hated and feared by the population. When fear disappeared with the triumph of nationalities, only hatred remained. It is quite natural that the aristocrats who had considered themselves as strangers among the masses they ruled, or who had been traitors to the national cause, should lose influence in the new states that came to life in spite of them.

In Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugo-Slavia, peasant, or at least "non-noble," landownership has replaced the former almost complete land-monopoly of the aristocracy. This change, revolutionary in appearance as it was, soon proved to be a powerful element of social peace. It is, indeed, the ousting of boyards and Austrian counts from their estates that saved Rumania, and Yugo-Slavia, and Czechoslovakia, from the Bolshevist menace on their flanks—especially Rumania. The new small landowners of these countries may have many shortcomings—and, indeed, some of their governments have. But they are the reality of to-morrow. They are, much more than they believe themselves to be, the greatest growing reason for peace in the European East. Contented peasants do not vote for war-thirsty jingoes.

The Hungarian aristocrats know that their landless peasants look with some envy on their Slav neighbors. That is why—perhaps sincerely, the art of self-deception is so deep!—the Magyar aristocracy agitates the flag of arch-patriotism and reconquest. It is the old trick: to over-excite patriotism when there is a danger of dissatisfaction at home.

But powerful, intelligent, profoundly conscious of its "rights," as the Hungarian aristocracy still is—the unique aristocracy left, as an organization, on the European con-

tinent—it is impossible to deny that the great spring of its agitation is the fear of losing its privileged economic position. This establishes, nevertheless, a certain difference between them and their ancestors, who wanted to die *"pro rege nostra Maria Theresa,"* without any material interest in view.

In the long course of their spirited history, the Magyar aristocracy, and the Magyar gentry as well, never so much as suspected that it was fair, or might be politic, to exercise a little justice toward the subject races of St. Stephen's Crown, or to treat them with some degree of equality. Their Thousand-Year-Old Constitution has always been, is still to-day, a framework to keep up the rights of a feudal country, against the Crown when there is need, against the nameless people always. Throughout the centuries, the Hungarian noblemen's conception of the "nation" was precisely that of the famous *Codex Tripartitum:* "the prelates, the barons and other magnates, also the nobles, but not the commoners."

Since Franz Joseph had, in 1867, accepted the *Ausgleich,* the Hungarians had begun to exercise on the matters pertaining to the Dual Monarchy an influence that grew from year to year. One may say without exaggeration, that in the days of the Andrassys, and of the two Tiszas, the Hungarian aristocracy—that is to say, a group of dauntless, hard landowners—had taken such a firm hold of the common helm that Hungary really governed Austria by the agency of the dynasty.

Fierce enemies of Russia, on the pretext that they had not forgiven the Russian invasion of 1849, but really because of the hopes that the Russians had awakened in the hearts of their Slav subjects; admirers of Germany, or, better said, of what was worst in Germany: Hohenzollernism, oppression of the Poles, the Hungarians were,

of all people, the most naïve and ardent supporters of Pan-Germanism. One of the prophets of this movement, Schönerer, had one day said: "I hold reconciliation with the Slavs to be a useless effort; the question is simply whether our supremacy or that of the Slavs shall triumph in Austria. . . . One always talks of equality between Germans and Slavs. It is as if one compared a lion to a louse because both are animals."

The Hungarian noblemen had already expressed this, centuries earlier, in a saying that had the merit, at least, of being briefer, and that I heard myself, before the war, in some of their castles that ruled over Serbian villages: *"Tòt-ember nem embu"* (The Slav is no man).

Count Stephen Tisza, as I knew him in Hungary and in Austria during the years preceding the World War, has always seemed to me the most typical embodiment of that Hungarian state of mind; typical in that Tisza—adopted as he had been by the aristocracy who found in him the staunchest defender of their privileges; titled as he had become—had emerged from the humbler spheres of the gentry, from those small noblemen whom the *Codex Tripartitum* tolerated behind the magnates as members of the nation.

Violent as all the other Magyars, and blind as they to all that runs counter to them (the Magyar nobles perceive only what is in conformity with their wishes), in one thing did Tisza impress me as being himself, as being not, like the others, a sample of a caste. Tisza, proud, but proud beyond any suspicion of vanity, was never known to make verbal propaganda for Hungary. Hard and unimaginative, he believed solely in the potency of facts; and in that alone he was the very opposite of the innumerable Magyar counts who, before the war, buttonholed you with Hungary's rights, as they now do with their pathetic and everlasting:

"We saved Europe from the Turks, and see how Europe rewards us."

Tall, ungainly, thin, badly dressed, lost and embarrassed in a drawing-room, Tisza struck me, the first time I saw him, as a cross between a game-keeper in his Sunday best and a fanatical monk. In his grounds, or at shooting-parties among friends, the embarrassed air disappeared, and in spite of the hard features one felt drawn toward him, at least by an entire absence of that comedy, of that false good-nature and seeming heartiness, so common in politicians of all countries. A Presbyter of the Hungarian Calvinist Church, many of his personal characteristics can be traced to his Calvinistic origin: rich, his parsimony bordered upon avarice; studious and cultured, knowing Europe well, he hid his knowledge as others would their ignorance; frantic chauvinist, he could, when he thought it necessary, curb the white heat of his Magyars.

The qualities of the gentry whence he had sprung betrayed themselves in him when the joy of living made him forget his Calvinism as soon as he found himself among his thoroughbred provincial Magyars. There he felt his heart beat in unison with theirs; there he threw off his mask, and the master of Hungary indulged in dancing *czardas* till dawn, flourishing handkerchief, doing in fact all those things that the other aristocrats spoke of with fondness to us strangers, but that they no longer knew how to do. Besides, Tisza—and there lies, perhaps, his most characteristic and in some ways tragical trait—had in his mind identified the power and the future of the nation with the social class he had been admitted into; but he disliked that class, or, at any rate, gaged it. He felt that many among the Hungarian aristocrats could easily have become *Kaiserlich* again like their grandfathers, if they had hoped to serve their interests better thus than by a show of Hungarian patriotism; he

knew that practically not one of them possessed Hungarian language and literature as he did. One day, speaking in my presence of a Palffy of whose political conduct he disapproved, he exclaimed: "Those Palffys, those ardent patriots, who are so proud of the fact that, for the last two centuries, they have married into foreign families only!"

His wife came, as he did, from the small Hungarian nobility, and he loved her all the more for it. Enormous, always at his side, the couple recalled somewhat Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. He sometimes saw the smiles, but he ignored them. When he came home after some stormy sitting in Parliament, he would kneel on a little foot-stool by the side of this unprepossessing woman who would stroke his forehead for hours. . . .

As his father, Koloman Tisza, had done before him, Stephen Tisza managed the affairs of his country for nearly a quarter of a century. Ardent hatreds and just as ardent devotion always surrounded him. The Hungarian Catholics hated him for his Calvinism, the chauvinists hated in him, who was as chauvinistic as they, his loyalty to the Austrian Kaiser (in private conversation he never indulged in the cheap fashion of calling his sovereign "the King" as most Hungarians affected to do; of course, in public speeches he said the King). He had rivals, or would-be rivals, in all parties, his own included, who feared that he would follow in his father's footsteps, and that he would govern the country alone for a whole generation.

This government was no easy task. But Stephen Tisza proved once again that, for want of outstanding intellectual gifts, the best way to remain in power long is to have few ideas, simple, but unalterable. Most certainly, he saw nothing of the dangers his policy might one day bring to the country he loved so much; he failed to see that a policy of understanding and of solidarity with the subject races

would, in the long run, be more useful to the Magyars than their inane feudal policy, all pride and domineering. But those were vistas he had not sufficient imagination to evoke. He could only see immediate contingencies, and boasted of it. One can not deny that, in his restricted field of action, he showed a continuity of thought difficult to equal.

Head of a nation so proud of ruling over Rumanians and Serbs and Croats, he never forgot what his partizans so often and so illogically pretended to forget, that the closest military and political union with Vienna could alone insure an adequate guarantee to Magyar supremacy within the kingdom.

Accordingly, how much ill-concealed contempt did he not feel for those Hungarian magnates, like Albert Apponyi for instance, who thought they could indulge in petty skirmishes with Vienna and keep at the same time a monopoly of power in a Hungary where the real Magyars were nothing but a minority! In spite of the unpopularity the masses rewarded him with, he never compromised; in the recurring struggles about the Hungarian Army, he always stood for the maintenance of the "Austrian" system. The Emperor was grateful to him for this, and thought he had almost a *Kaiserlich* in him. As it was, Tisza was only thinking of serving Hungary better than his friends did with their everlasting outcries.

With the same unbending obstinacy, he always refused to change anything pertaining to the restricted suffrage that maintained in his country the feudal system he clung to all his life. Truth to tell, if it were worth while to stop at personal impressions unsubstantiated by proofs, I should say that Tisza always struck me as being more Hungarian than feudal, and that he so whole-heartedly favored the privilege system which he seemed to personify, because, unimaginative as he was, he never succeeded in seeing any other way of securing the life of his Magyarized Hungary.

The same lack of imagination explains his somewhat contradictory-seeming conduct during the July, 1914, crisis that caused the World War. Hungarian propagandists, whose most picturesque exportation specimen is Count Apponyi, pretend now, when they speak in the old Entente countries, that the war was forced upon a peace-loving Hungary against her wishes, by the Austrian and German Governments. Their main argument has one name, and only one: Tisza.

In reality, and even if we take into consideration only the document so frequently alluded to but more rarely quoted in full by the advocates of Magyar innocence, we find it rather difficult to credit the then Hungarian Prime Minister with an excess of pacifistic feelings:

"As things stand in the Balkans," so he wrote to Franz Joseph on July first, "I would not be in the least troubled to discover a suitable *casus belli;* it is easy to create a case for war. But first of all, a diplomatic constellation must be created, such as to make the balance of power more favorable to us." In a word, he was simply afraid—and in this he was less blind than Berchtold in Vienna—that Italy and, with Italy, Rumania and Bulgaria, would not look with friendly eyes on a warlike situation improvised on the pretense of Serbian responsibility in the Sarajevo murder, of which responsibility he was far from being convinced. Moreover, the something that Tisza's attitude during the early days of July seemed to imply, and that some diplomats—not all of them—interpreted as a token of his devotion to peace, was, simply and quite unconsciously on his part, nothing more than the manifestation of an intense relief at the disappearance of that Archduke Franz Ferdinand whom he had feared and hated so much in his lifetime, as being the greatest potential enemy of Magyar privileges. Hence his leniency toward Serbian responsibilities. It may be that, in his Calvinistic heart, he ex-

claimed, as Franz Joseph did when he was informed of the murder: "A Higher Power has reestablished the appointed order!"

But fourteen days after his cautious memorandum to the Emperor, Tisza had changed his mind. On July fourteenth, after he had called on Berchtold, he went to see the German Ambassador, Von Tschirschky, and declared to him that, after the doubts he had entertained in the beginning, "every day was now strengthening his conviction that the Monarchy must come to an energetic decision, in order to prove its vitality." Complete agreement had now been reached among all the leading factors, Tisza added, and the Emperor had been much influenced in his decision by Germany's unconditional stand on the side of the Monarchy.

On the same day, reporting this conversation to Bethmann-Hollweg, the German Ambassador quoted literally these further words of the Hungarian Premier: "It was hard for me to decide for war, but I now believe in its necessity, and shall stand with all my strength for the greatness of the Monarchy."

It is true that this is a German document. But first of all, no professional ambassador like Von Tschirschky would run the risk of having to contradict or weaken his own statements on such a decisive point; second, the German version is corroborated by what Berchtold told: to wit, that on the same day the terms of the ultimatum to Serbia had been discussed, everybody had agreed, and Tisza had even insisted on having certain parts accentuated. Furthermore, if the slightest argument for the Magyar case had been discovered in Tisza's papers, one may be sure that Hungarian propagandists would have published it; but they have taken good care to do nothing of the kind.

What happened then between the first and the fourteenth of July that made Tisza change his mind? Simply

this: on the first he was not certain whether Germany would back Austria-Hungary with all her might. On the fourteenth he knew it, as is shown by his conversation with the German Ambassador.

For Tisza—it was his greatest weakness—believed in force only. In the very last days of July, he exchanged a few words with the Belgian Minister in Vienna, Count Dudzeele, my wife's father. The Austrian leaders considered him as one of them, born as he was in Austria, and related to their caste. He expressed his concern for the forthcoming tragedy, and did what big ambassadors would have been unable to do: he expressed words of doubt even for the future of Austria. Tisza listened to him, and then, after a silence, said:

"My dear Count, Germany is invincible."

And on this apophthegm rapidly went out.

Certainly he must, in 1917 and '18, have had to alter his convictions. But, like Dante's Farinata, he did not alter his attitude. In September, 1918, three months after the decisive defeat inflicted on the Austro-Hungarian Armies on the Piave, on the eve of Bulgaria's capitulation, he had been sent to Bosnia to maintain the situation there. To a delegation of Bosnians, who as yet spoke modestly of autonomy, he did not hesitate to answer bluntly:

"This talk of yours is mere Slav stupidity; the maintenance of Dualism is a vital necessity for the Monarchy. The Monarchy lives and will live! If you go on plotting, we still have strength enough to destroy you!"

And all this was accompanied with a menacing flourish of his riding-whip. The scene has been related to me by some of the Slavs who were present. Two hypotheses are equally possible: the imperturbable leader had lost control of his nerves, or, in his despair, he took up this defiant attitude, to die as he had lived rather than to give in.

If, when he went back to Budapest a few days later, he went knowing that in a city seething with revolution he might find death, it is the second hypothesis that is more likely.

On the morning of October thirty-first, three soldiers entered his house and asked for him:

"What do you want of me?"

"To try you, for you are responsible for the war."

And another added:

"It is your fault if I suffered four years in the trenches, and if my wife went gay."

Countess Tisza was with him.

"Make the fat woman go," said another one of the murderers.

The brave woman clung to her husband.

The three men raised their guns and shot. Tisza fell; his wife threw herself on his body.

The dying man, in a spirit of Calvinistic resignation, murmured to her:

"I knew it; it had to be."

In the heat of the furious post-war hatreds, when everything was, or seemed to be, fear of Bolshevism, Count Karolyi, head of the provisional Hungarian Government when the murder was committed, was accused of having secretly plotted the death of the man who had been his implacable enemy all his life. After Bela Kun's Bolshevist *coup,* Karolyi resigned and retired to Florence in Italy. We had there, as everywhere, Russian refugees, who, in the midst of the sorrows of exile and of the terrible misery they had to contend with, were obsessed by a persecution mania and saw nothing but Soviet agents everywhere. They had a denunciation sent to me against Karolyi—substantiated, they believed—accusing him of having been the murderer of Tisza. I ordered a secret and severe investiga-

tion to be made in Hungary, and entrusted it to men for whom Karolyi's extreme Liberal views strongly savored of Bolshevism. Their report—most disagreeably for them—concluded to the effect that Karolyi and his friends had been totally unconnected with the murder.[1]

Michael Karolyi, in the eyes of all those for whom country, patriotism, military glory are nothing but words with which to cover up the exclusive safeguarding of caste interests, was guilty of a far greater crime: he had favored an agrarian reform in Hungary that would have curtailed the power and wealth of the great landowners. Worse still: he had practised what he preached, and had made a beginning with his own estates.

Tisza dead, Karolyi in exile, a short period of Red Terror, a long period of White Terror—and Hungary still goes on now as in Tisza's time. The great magnates still retain their immense properties, while the Hungarian peasants lead a life of misery.

One thing has changed: in the days of Tisza, all around Hungary, in Croatia as in Rumania, the landed magnates were supreme, and the Hungarian peasants had nothing very brilliant to look upon when they cast a glance beyond the plains of the Alfold. Post-war Hungary is now an island of feudal privileges surrounded by an ocean of small peasant-owned properties.

It is not impossible that this might have constituted one of those immediate contingencies that even Tisza, for all his

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[1]It is true that Karolyi was expelled from Italy while I was still in power. I had shown to Giolitti the report on my investigations in Hungary, a report that was absolutely favorable to Karolyi. But Giolitti informed me that some White Russians were plotting against the former head of the Hungarian Government whom they did not want in Florence, and that it would be very embarrassing for us to have, in the person of Karolyi, a center or pretext for agitations and disorders. I made no objections. But I think it is my duty, in view of the many silly legends prevailing, to state that there was no other reason for our interdicting him to stay in Italy.

lack of imagination, might have grasped, and from which he might have drawn conclusions.

For you must grant Tisza this one thing: that whereas his equals were always talking about Hungary, but in reality used her solely as the mainstay of their privileges, Tisza clung to the privileges because he believed them to be the surest means wherewith to keep Hungary, as he conceived her, alive.

His error was, like all the errors of his life, an error due to lack of imaginative intelligence.

# SHADOWS OF THE PAST

*Que l'on a bien fait de distinguer les hommes par l'extérieur plutôt que par les qualités intérieures!*

*. . . on ne vent pas que j'honore un homme vêtu de brocatelle et suivi de sept à huit laquais!*—PASCAL

## VII

## EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

I KNEW Empress Eugénie, the widow of Napoleon III, in the last ten years of her life, when I was a young member of the Italian Embassy to Great Britain. She was living at Farnborough Hill, a picturesque residence a few miles from London. After that, I saw her several times in Paris where she used to come every year. I never succeeded in making out whether her indifference to past memories was strength of character or insensibility and lack of imagination.

She had escaped from the Tuileries in August, 1870, under the protection of Nigra, the Italian Envoy, and of Metternich, the Austrian Ambassador; she had fled to the Channel under the escort of an American dentist, Doctor Evans. The Tuileries had been burned by an infuriated populace. And year after year, when she regularly began in May and June to spend a few weeks in Paris, she always stayed at a hotel in the Rue de Rivoli, facing the Jardin des Tuileries, the destroyed scene of her vanished "glory." In this hotel, the niece of one of her former ladies-in-waiting once commiserated with her, in my presence, on the pain she must have felt when she first looked out of her windows at the place where once stood the now destroyed palace of the Tuileries.

"The woman who triumphed there is dead; I do not know her any more."

So answered in a sharp and, I am afraid, rather theatri-

cal way, the ex-Empress. The word "triumphed" shocked me, I remembered, as unreal and unroyal.

My impression when I had seen her before, at Farnborough Hill, had been more or less analogous: an admiration which led me to say, "the forceful character!" but to add also, "the wonderfully resistant actress!"

The greatest surprise I felt at Farnborough was to discover that not only the Empress had disappeared, but also the French woman. All that seemed to me alive in her now were the souvenirs of her early Spanish life. And I suppose that if she invited me again and again—in spite of her scanty sympathy for Italy and for Italians—it was because I deeply loved so many things Spanish, from the Prado museum to the peasant folk-lore, and that she liked to hear about my Andalusian wanderings.

The more I knew her, the more I felt that, to her, her French life must have been like a dream; that the Tuileries must have been like the scene of some fantastic fête where the hard morning light breaks upon the trampled lawns, the tumbled garlands and the artificial arches. Of course, it had been a fête that had lasted nearly twenty years. But a fête, a comedy, it had been, nothing more. And her life had been so long. . . .

Of this long fête, of this vulgar mingling of corrupt comedy and bloody tragedy which was the Second French Empire, the Empress Eugénie had been the heroine. She was cast for a magnificent part; she played it superbly with all her beauty and her feminine charm. But it was still a part and nothing more; she had been a queen, yes, but a stage queen. The stage-feeling never wore off with her. Such, at least, is the impression she always gave me.

Hearts and minds like these are probably not the aptest to nurse deep family feelings.

At Farnborough Hill the meals were served in a long gallery; behind the Empress' place was a marble bust of

her son, showing a pleasant young English face that had nothing of the dark and feverish Bonaparte type. She told me more than once the tragic end of the Prince Impérial. After the defeat of Sédan, in 1870, there was no more room in France for Bonapartes. Her son went quietly to England with his mother. In his second year of exile, November, 1872, he entered the Military Academy at Woolwich, and in 1875 passed seventh into the commission class. Being a Frenchman, being a *prétendant,* it was impossible for him to enter the British Army in the ordinary way. But they had in England at the time a small colonial war, somewhere in a rather unknown Zululand. When the Zulu war began to go wrong, he asked to be allowed to join the army. The Duke of Cambridge, then Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, suggested that he might go, but on his own account. The Duke told the young Prince that he would receive special letters for Lord Chelmsford, Commander-in-Chief of the forces in South Africa, who was to allow him to follow the operations. He sailed from Southampton on February 27, 1879; the Empress Eugénie was there to see him off.

A few weeks after his arrival in the British colony, the Prince went with a reconnoitering party to a place nearer the enemy. The party, consisting of the Prince, a Captain Carey who was in command, and six soldiers of whom one was a Frenchman named Le Tocq, were surprised while resting in a kraal without having taken the proper precautions. The attacking party numbered about forty. They had no difficulty in coming unobserved through the high grass. When they had detected the small British party, they waited till Carey had given the order to mount, and then fired and rushed. Carey and four of the party, including Le Tocq, got away. A native and two of the white troopers were killed. The Prince's horse took fright, and failing to mount, he ran alongside it until it broke away from him.

Then, single-handed, he fought seven or eight of the enemy—"like a lion at bay" as the Zulus said later on—and fell with sixteen wounds. Captain Carey arrived at the residence of the Commander-in-Chief.

"My Lord," he said, "the Prince is dead."

"And you, sir, you live?" was Lord Chelmsford's answer.

All this I heard more than once, always repeated in almost the same words by the Empress. She used to speak of her son, of his end, with a detachment that alternately aroused in me contradictory feelings.

She did not even insist on Carey's cowardice; she, at any rate, refused to judge the case. The only time she ever put a little more warmth in her narrative was when she discarded as too silly for words the inevitable French tales about *"la perfide Albion"*—who, so the Bonapartist groups were whispering in France, had schemed the death of the last heir of the Napoleons. Once the Empress got up, took from a shelf the *Diary* of Queen Victoria and read me, perhaps not without some complacency, the following entry the Queen had made after her first condolence visit to the poor mother:

"It is heart-rending and most touching to see her. She is so uncomplaining, so gentle, resigned and not accusing any one, but utterly broken-hearted. *Pauvre petit, seulement 23 ans.*"

And another passage, of July, 1879, after a second visit:

"She then repeated again all the circumstances of his wishing to go to Africa. How, when he had first mentioned it, she tried to dissuade him in every way, and had even

thought of writing to me, in order to beg me to prevent it. But when she saw how bent he was upon it, saying to his mother that he had no object in life, *Je ne suis pas homme de plaisir,* that he cared for nothing of that kind nor for going out into society, refusing endless invitations, *Je ne peux rien faire dans mon propre pays,* what should he therefore do?—she felt she must no longer stand in his way. When he was refused he was in perfect despair, *Les pleurs jaillissaient de ses yeux, lui qui ne pleurait jamais,* and in answer to her question what was the matter, he replied, *'On m'a refusé.'* Seeing this, though the Empress was at first delighted at the thoughts of his not being able to go, she became alarmed at the state of despair he was in, and went herself to the War Office, unknown to any one, to ask if nothing could still be arranged for him to go in some way or another. She then turned to me, saying amidst tears, *'Vous ne croyez pas que j'aurais pu faire autrement que de le laisser partir?'* I assured her that I thought she had done quite right."

Only once did she betray living personal feelings about the Prince Impérial or something that concerned him. It was to complain that in 1870 the French had laughed at one of the first bulletins of war where the lad was described as calmly taking a lost bullet in his hands on the battle-field of Sarrebrück. Even with her lost son: prestige. Or, at least, she showed nothing else.

I tried more than once to put the conversation on that mad Mexican adventure for which the French Government and—at least judging by what Nigra, always inclined to excuse the Bonapartes, has told me—the Empress' mania for striking *coups* to enhance the prestige of the régime, are entirely responsible. And naturally so. The mania for theatrical effects in foreign affairs is inevitably characteristic of all dictatorial governments. She never told me anything that is not known already. One original plea I did hear from her however.

"It is easy," she one day remarked, "to criticize after the event. It may be that our Mexican informers were misled and misled us. But we also reckoned upon an eventuality of which we, and London also, were absolutely certain: the victory of the Southern States in the American Civil War. If that had happened, as we had a right to believe it would, the whole situation would have been changed in Mexico too."

It is worth mentioning, by the way, that all those "who knew," the diplomatic authorities, the Emperors in Paris and in Vienna, the Queen in London, all believed, up to the last moment, that the South was bound to win in the momentous struggle; whereas, at any rate in England, the masses, and the masses alone, showed that they had been able to guess accurately on which side victory would lie.

I made the remark to the Empress who answered with a laugh:

"Ah, you Italians, you are all the same: all infected with revolutionary ideas."

Strange to say, what the Empress more than once chose as a subject of conversation with me was the famous conspiracy of Orsini, the Italian patriot who made an attempt on Napoleon III's life, and who, on his last day, just before his execution, wrote a letter to the Emperor, to say that he was glad to die if his death could hasten the liberation of Italy. . . . She was still full of admiration for the Italian *carbonaro,* the nobility of his language, the dignity of his demeanor. . . . "The Emperor," she said, "never forgot it; from that moment dates perhaps his decision to help Italy in the war of 1859."

I was polite enough to bow, but I am afraid that, inwardly, I could not help wondering how far, when Napoleon III decided shortly afterward to ally himself with Victor Emmanuel in the war against Austria, his resolu-

tion was inspired by Orsini's letter, how far by the dread of a second *carbonari* bomb?[1]

During one of my sojourns in London for some of the post-war Supreme Councils I went, on a Sunday, to Farnborough Hill. The Empress had died some fifteen or twenty months before; and her residence, according to her will, had been changed into a flourishing Benedictine Abbey: Farnborough Abbey.

Little had been altered inside the house; but nothing was left of the old atmosphere. In the church, in front of the altar, lay an old Persian carpet, which I had seen formerly in one of the drawing-rooms; hanging from the wall, a big ivory crucifix with the label: "Gift from the Supreme Pontiff Pius IX for the happy birth of the Prince Impérial."

I looked at some pompous chairs of an Oriental design but with the Napoleonic coat-of-arms carved on their ebony.

*"Elle avait fourré partout l'écusson impérial,"* murmured the French monk who accompanied me and whom my rapid glance had not escaped.

I asked him whether he knew her in her last years, when she had already invited the Benedictines.

"Oh, yes, on the first year of the war I came back for a few days from France where I was serving as a soldier. I

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[1]It has never been told how the Orsini bombs which at the time seemed a mysterious and powerful weapon, were invented. In Sarzana, a small old town near a country-place of my family's, lived in the 'forties a priest, Canon Chiocca, who was also an amateur chemist. When out of his stall, he lived and experimented in a small laboratory of his own. One of his inventions was the bomb, afterward called *all'Orsini.* He sent his first specimen in 1849 to Mazzini, then in Rome as Triumvir of the Roman Republic. The canon advised Mazzini to use it against Pope Pius IX, "enemy of Italy,"—which did not prevent Chiocca from going to his church for his services till the end of his days. Quite an old man, he still complained to my grandfather that "Mazzini had not even answered."

The story, for all its old Italian flavor, was none the less the original cause for much of the blood shed at the Empress' feet. But when I told it to her, she merely remarked, "How awfully amusing!"

had kept my military uniform; as I was a territorial, I was wearing the old red trousers. For Mass, I only put a surplice over my uniform, so that my red trousers showed from beneath. I distinctly heard her saying to Monsieur Pietri, her secretary: *'Oh, oh, ils ont encore les pantalons rouges.'* "

The monk, who liked to talk in French, went on with his remarks.

"She talked all the time about Spain; and frequently in Spanish. She wanted to be considered a Spaniard. Once she bade a French writer, 'And now, give me some news about my dear old country.' 'Oh, in France, everybody . . .' started the writer, but she interrupted him in a weary way: 'No, no, I was thinking of my own country, Spain. . . .'

"She wanted even," the patriotic monk went on disapprovingly, "her coffin wrapped in a Spanish flag."

"And what happened?"

"Oh, we used the French flag. What else could we do since she had ordered that the inscription on her grave was to be: *Eugénie, Impératrice des Français.*"

Some of my questions had awakened the curiosity of the monk. He was evidently afraid of having said too much or too little. Would I not like to write my honorable name in the visitors' book?

So sorry, but I was in a hurry and went to my car, leaving the monk's curiosity unsatisfied—and my own unsatisfied, too, about the clever, imperious old woman I had known before the war. She had remained to me a cold psychological mystery in death as she had been in life. . . .

## VIII

## LORD CURZON

GEORGE CURZON was born at Kedleston, his family seat, in 1859, the eldest son of the Reverend Alfred Curzon, fourth Baron Scarsdale. He went to Eton, to Oxford; he won prizes, he entered the House of Commons in 1886, he made two journeys round the world, he wrote a book about his travels. . . . What more English? The Victorian atmosphere, the Church, the aristocracy. . . . His book and his travels. . . . Here is a sentence that sums up the gist of the book: "No Englishman can land in Hong Kong without feeling a thrill of pride for his nationality. Here is that furthermost link in that chain of fortresses which from Spain to China girds half the globe."

His travels through the East increased in him the conviction that England was invested with the right, or duty, to rule "backward races." One feels the same attitude again in the motives this son of a Victorian clergyman alleges for this mission "for some peculiar and inscrutable reason entrusted to England by Providence." Imperialism would be, he explained, "only a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal without this supreme thought: sense of sacrifice and idea of duty."

He could not but be named viceroy of India; he was, when he was thirty-nine years of age. He there showed that he believed in his own talk; he won the respect and loyalty of Indian public opinion by his justice, punishing—it was a novelty—outrages against Indians perpetrated by British officials. To the loss of favor of the English

world in India, he remained absolutely indifferent. It was more and less than contempt for unjust criticism: it was the attitude of God Almighty toward His creatures. During the Durbar of 1903, where his love for external pomp was at last satisfied, the following incident took place: The Ninth Lancer, a British cavalry regiment, was received during the final parade with a formidable storm of cheering by the British spectators, a protest against the punishments that the Viceroy had inflicted on it because the officers' mess had concealed the murder of a native cook. Curzon was indignant, not because of the opposition of his own people—he knew, and it was natural that the others should not—but because of the esthetic break in the show and of the external breach of respect.

As to the natives, his exalted station did not allow him to think that there might, among the Indian masses, be other tendencies or moral aspirations than those that were possible within the bounds of a *status quo* willed by Providence. He always believed that, as he wrote, "efficiency of administration is a synonym for the content of the governed." The Indians who dreamed of something warmer than his British efficiency he discarded in a lordly manner as a "handful of agitators," and he ignored their ideas; they were not in the divinely appointed order of things.

The kindest of his biographers has written quite candidly: "It was wholly in keeping with his almost patriarchal conception of relations between himself and the India of his vision, that he should have come to believe that his own judgments of what was in her interest were the judgments of the Indian people."[1]

It is hard, or at least it was then, when Great Britain was not confronted with as many doubts as now, to come back from India after years of viceroyalty, and to be no

[1]Lord Ronaldsay's *Life of Lord Curzon.*

longer a Superior Person. Curzon had not only been a viceroy; more naïvely than any of his predecessors, he had sincerely believed in the bows and genuflections of which he had been the object. At the same time—men are full of such contradictions—he had remained, behind his pompous ways, a timid man, as, under his blustering manners, he was a man devoid of true courage and of true pride.

The fact that he could become foreign secretary of the British Empire during the terrible years of the post-war period proves that we, on the European continent and in America, will never be able to fathom the mysteries and the guilelessness of English decisions. Of all the errors he committed during that period, the weightiest is certainly, morally speaking, that of having seen, enlightened by his subordinates of the Foreign Office, the dangers entailed by some of the fixed ideas of the Premier, and of never having put up the necessary opposition to them. The adequate opposition would have been a threat of resignation, but he was too fond of his place to risk being taken at his word by Lloyd George.

A prime minister, even when he believes he is doing everything, or pretends to do everything, is, in actual fact, the prisoner of the daily decisions that the other ministers take, are bound to take, without him. But even that means of counter-balancing influence, yet quite automatic, Lord Curzon failed to take; and without knowing it or meaning to, prevented his Foreign Office from making use of it. Lord Curzon's greatest pleasure in life, at any rate when I knew him and we were colleagues in a great many Inter-Allied conferences, was to state a case in a long and flowery speech, or in a dozen pages of beautiful English, and then—then to lose almost all interest in the further development of the question. Happen what might, he always referred to this famous speech or to his famous note

wherein, all contingencies having of course been met, a sort of Curzonian hypothesis of what was going to happen had also been outlined.

For all his English pride, it never occurred to him that he might use the immense power of the British Empire to enforce certain recommendations or wishes of his. To take an example: Although at the bottom of his heart he never completely shared Lloyd George's Turkish policy, he resented as much as his chief did that, when England found herself, in September, 1922, in danger of a war with Turkey at Chanak, Italy and France declared that they would remain neutral. About Italy, indeed, nothing could be done, so clearly had I warned England against the danger, and so avowedly different had the Italian policy been which I inaugurated in Turkey, and which my successors had followed. But France, anxious for British support on the Rhine, had never clearly cut herself off from England in the Near East. Notwithstanding which, Curzon never thought of turning toward the Quai d'Orsay and of giving them to understand that if Paris withdrew the French troops from Chanak, England would withdraw her troops from the Rhine. That would have been "action"; but "doing" things did not enter into Curzon's sphere of thought.

A few days after the Chanak episode came the Armistice of Mudania which put an end to the war operations between Greeks and Turks and consecrated the triumphant return of the "unspeakable Turk" to Europe. But at Mudania, a little harbor on the Asiatic coast of the Sea of Marmora, nothing but military details were settled; the main political lines had been drafted in a conference that had been held a few days earlier in Paris, whither Curzon had gone for that purpose. He had, at the last moment, decided to have a direct conversation on Turkish affairs with Poincaré, then prime minister and minister for foreign

Lord Curzon

affairs. He had a right to. But what neither he nor Poincaré had any right to do, was to make fast decisions about Turkey in the absence of Italy. For indeed one of the paradoxes of the post-war situation was this: that, toward the end of the year of grace 1922, the Allies still remained "the Allies," since a convention signed in London on September 4, 1914, obliged them to keep to their bond, forbade them to negotiate a separate peace as long as an enemy remained; and their theoretical last enemy—Turkey—remained then, not because we were fighting her, but simply because we had never found our way, out of English ill-will, to agree on a possible formula for peace.

On the morning after Curzon's arrival, as soon as I learned—I was then ambassador in Paris—that he had been to the Quai d'Orsay and that the discussion had begun, I called to the telephone Monsieur Hermite, Poincaré's chief secretary, and asked him to be so kind as to tell his chief that I considered as null and void not only "decisions"—of that, in the absence of Italy, there could be no question—but even exchanges of ideas on a matter that involved Italian interest at every moment. Half an hour later, I received from Poincaré a pressing invitation to come and take part in the conversation at the Quai d'Orsay. Curzon sent me the same message to which he had, however, added somewhat sharply that he did not thereby imply that he had not the right to speak alone with Poincaré as often as he felt so inclined.

The matter was not worth taking up, but well the tune to which it was sung. I replied immediately that it was the first time in my life I was invited to dinner after the first course, and that I really could not find my way to joining in a discussion that was already started. In answer to this, an official of the Quai d'Orsay came and assured me that, if I consented to come in the afternoon, the proceed-

ings would be begun again from the beginning, and the minutes of the morning sitting annulled. But the excellent Curzon went further; with all the work he had, he still found time to send me, before lunch, a letter four pages long, written in his beautiful and flowing hand, to dispel all "misunderstandings" and to assure me of the pleasure it was to him to resume a collaboration of which he had kept "such a pleasant recollection."

The truth of the matter was, nevertheless, that as soon as Curzon had arrived in Paris, Poincaré had expressed the opinion that I should take part in the conversations; but Curzon had ignored the hint, indicating that the conversation was private; in reality, because he knew too well my ideas on the Turkish situation, ideas that were opposed to his, or rather to Lloyd George's. Undoubtedly, had I not been so explicit, he would have gone on excluding me—and would have boasted of it afterward as of a diplomatic success.

His long quarrels with Poincaré about the Turkish affairs first, about the Ruhr occupation afterward, were due to an analogous style. He irritated Poincaré and rendered all collaboration impossible; but each time the French Premier lost patience, Curzon took care not to front him—that is, to abide by the logical consequences of his previous attitude.

During the Paris conversations on the peace with Turkey, out of which Curzon had tried to keep me, Poincaré, two or three times, used with him arguments and expressions—Poincaré's manner is sometimes very stiff—the hardness of which struck me as being almost cruel,—the element of cruelty lying in the difference of mental level between the two men. Possibly because I was less engrossed than Poincaré in his mercilessly logical reasoning, I could notice Curzon's sufferings, which Poincaré did not. At the first pause

in the sitting Lord Curzon came and walked up and down with me in the contiguous *salon de l'Horloge*. Suddenly he burst out sobbing (I learned later on from Curzon's friends that he had *la larme facile)*: "Do you not think it terrible that I should be treated in this manner? Never in my life before have I had to endure such speeches."

And pulling from the depths of his frock coat a silver hip-flask, he swallowed an invigorating mouthful of brandy. I was so embarrassed that I believe I poured out to him a charitable untruth of the kind one tells children when they have a fit of nerves, and told him that I had myself been obliged to put up with like discourses from Poincaré. In spite of the real concern I felt for him, I had at that moment the revelation of what had always been in my eyes the Curzon phenomenon. This former Viceroy, this Foreign Secretary of the British Empire, seemed to all appearances a man, and he was a man in many ways, but his soul was still that of an Oxford student who weeps because he has not won a prize. A case of stunted inner development: his magnificent discourses, exercises; his majestic diplomatic notes, the compositions of a *fort en thèmes*. And I once more told myself that England must really be a powerful country, and a marvelous organism, since . . .

I do not think, for that matter, that it is this mental immaturity that would have prevented Curzon from becoming prime minister, the dream of his life. No Englishman probably possessed as he did the sort of oratory *de circonstance* which is expected of a premier; probably when he was still at Oxford, he already spoke like a prime minister. What lost him, among the English people, was that he failed to realize that a man of his sort must not try to be "clever." He did, in home politics, and it was a pitiful show. At the end of the war no one surpassed him in silliness or in demagogy when he went out for "hanging the Kaiser." Of

course he was not the sponsor of the idea, which probably belonged to some English newspaperman of German origin. But he was the first public man to adopt it in official circles. And it was probably, by the way, the first and last time that Lord Curzon influenced Lloyd George's mind, since the Prime Minister took the idea from him and adopted it, for a while, with Lloyd Georgian vehemence. A few months later, Curzon had quite forgotten his "idea." Again, as president of the Anti-Suffrage League, he spoke fiercely against woman suffrage, only to insure the suffrage by voting for it in the House of Lords. In various other cases—for example in the Montague-Chelmsford Indian Reforms—he showed the same ambiguity, an ambiguity that purported to be political finesse.

It was after all these instances, I believe, that a tacit opinion spread itself in England: the man does not possess the strength of character that he tries to make us believe he has. Had he possessed that strength of character, his intellectual shortcomings might possibly not have prevented him from securing the supreme post he so naïvely desired.

In England, two thick volumes bound in dark blue are dedicated, after their death, to men who have filled such posts as did Curzon; after a few months or years the books and their heroes are forgotten for ever.

I believe that in the volumes dedicated to Curzon it was stated as an axiomatic truth that he rendered a last great service to his country by the way he presided over the first part of the Lausanne Conference for the Peace with Turkey. With the best of good will, I can not see how this can be contended.

A few weeks after our negotiations in Paris about the Armistice with Turkey, Fascism came into power in Italy. Suspicious as I am of dictatorships and of *coups d'état,* I had resigned my ambassadorship at once, and had refused to

withdraw my resignation, despite pressure to the contrary from Mussolini who in vain requested me to remain at the head of the Paris Embassy. Therefore I took no part in the Lausanne negotiations, to which I had already been designated as first plentipotentiary by Mussolini when, in the first hours of his triumph, he had not imagined for a moment that any one might tender his resignation and decide to have nothing to do with him.

But, on the eve of the Lausanne meeting, I met Curzon who asked my advice on the situation. As he was not devoid of a somewhat generous sense of loyalty, he had ended by owning that the mistake had been his, and that it was I who, for all my apparent excess of conciliatory spirit, had best tried to safeguard the interests of the West. I told Curzon our last asset was that the Turks had not yet realized the scope of their victory, nor to what an extent Europe was divided; consequently our salvation, I concluded, lay in drafting the treaty quickly, in a few days; and that any week after the first ten days needed to draw up a treaty would spell defeat for us.

Curzon, admitting I was right, said that he would try to settle matters in two weeks.

He had grasped the point; he was sincere. But what would have become of his solemn harangues, of his summaries of discussions that were longer than the discussions themselves? Thus it came to pass that they talked and talked. And one of the wittiest of the Turks, whom I chanced to meet for a few minutes on a train during the interminable conference said to me: *"Ça va,* they talk; and while they talk, we get more determined." And he added: "We were so grateful when you helped us in Constantinople during our dark days; now we are even more, because you are not at the Conference."

I quote this, notwithstanding its somewhat complimen-

tary tone, because it shows what service the Curzon method rendered to the Turks.

I almost hesitate to add a final touch to Curzon's character because it is agreed that certain things are cruel to note; but to me they seem painful and pathetic, as anything does that indicates a lack of moral self-assertion, of spiritual balance. Rich by marriage, he ended, poor Curzon, by suffering from a megalomania, which he did not even try to hide, with regard to his castles, his artistic collections, even his social position. While the penny newspapers were giving portraits of him as the ideal aristocrat, his equals by birth made pitiless fun of his foibles and invented numerous stories that would go the round of all the dining-rooms, such as his conversation with the Queen when the Duke of York got engaged: "Myself, Madam, have married twice beneath my station, and have been happy each time. . . ." Or like the tale of the old Countess who, in February, 1922, was pitying her nephew at the Foreign Office because he would have to work with this horrid Socialist Macdonald: "But, aunt, it is such a relief to deal with a real gentleman at last. . . ."

These are the words of people who were tired of his pomposity or who had smiled when they had caught the great man radiant at some unexpected compliment. Such is life, and one has no time to stop and look into the depths of souls. Otherwise one would have seen in Curzon something profoundly sad: the man who realizes little by little that, in order to become a statesman, it was not sufficient to have traveled round the world, or to have toiled for that end from schooldays. When the great disappointment of his life came, Baldwin appointed prime minister instead of him, he got out on a solitary day at Kedleston the school reports in which, forty or fifty years earlier, his masters had all predicted "a great future for him." And he

wrote to a friend: "I never seem to get any credit for anything nowadays. No one accuses me of any definite errors or blunders of statesmanship. But there seems to be a general tendency to run me down, or completely to ignore what I am doing or have done. If one looks at the record of this in any book of reference it is very substantial, as varied, and in a way successful, as that of any Englishman of my age living. And yet it does not seem to count for much, and I am treated as if I were rather a back number. Well, perhaps I am. I suppose one gets what one deserves and I daresay the fault lies somewhere in me. And yet, how I have worked and toiled, and never spared myself. . . ." And he went on thus for pages in his handwriting that had remained youngish and elegant. When I read them, I could not help feeling a touch of sadness at the sight of this old man who, embittered and lonely, still failed to understand that life is not a career one begins at Eton and at Oxford. . . . His failure took in my eyes a broader meaning: the failure of the whole of that educational and social system by which England had, for a century, imagined she could supply the people with ready-made statesmen—that conservative Europe afterward admired.

# THE WAR
# SOME DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

*—Pourquoi me tuez-vous?*
*—Eh, quoi! ne demeurez-vous pas de l'autre côté de l'eau?*—PASCAL

# IX

## Foch, The Frenchman

WHAT I saw of the war I saw only in Albania and in Macedonia. Foch was never there—nor his spirit either. That is why I dare to think that the memory I keep of my long intercourse with Foch, after the war, and of the impression it left on me, are worth recording. No one knows as yet what will survive of war reputations. More than that, after thousands of years of tales of human slaughter, the value of military geniuses has not yet been determined. One of the greatest poets of the nineteenth century, Tolstoi, probably came nearest the truth in *War and Peace*.

It is because the memory I keep of Foch is one of rare moral purity that I feel as though I were witnessing a cheap travesty when I see, especially since his death in March, 1929, so many French writers launching their inevitable parallels with Napoleon.

Indeed it is frequently like that in France, where the second-rate fraternity of commercial writers, who bring forth two books in the year,—the really great French writers holding aloof in contemptuous silence,—are always at work to belittle the highest French personalities with their patriotic mania for casting them willy-nilly into the artificial mold of their crystallized Racinian heroes.

How can any one possibly compare Foch to Bonaparte?

Foch was a deeply honest and disinterested man, and Bonaparte was, to say the least of it, an archtype of egotist. Foch ardently loved his France, and Bonaparte, the

Corsican, who at the Brienne College had hated his French comrades so violently for their French jokes, only liked France as a tool for his glory; Foch was generous and warm-hearted, while Bonaparte can scarcely be credited with one act of uncalculated generosity. Foch, above all, knew the limitations of military force, while the only excuse for Bonaparte's endless series of political follies is that he was unable to see anything outside of his military game (his overrated juridical and philosophical reflections belonging in reality to the cheap arsenal of "sovereigns" with whom a little intelligence seems such a marvel). Foch learned some deep political and moral lessons; and Bonaparte never did.

I rather like, indeed, having known Foch only after the war. Two Fochs were then living within him: the old French officer, Catholic and an ardent supporter of authority, was still well alive; but another Foch had arisen, a Foch ripened by what he had seen, by what he had the merit of not having shut his eyes to.

The first time I met him was in June, 1920, at the Inter-Allied Supreme Council in Boulogne. On the day of my arrival, wishing to speak with my French colleague, Millerand, I had crossed over to his apartment, in the same hotel on the Quai. Millerand being engaged in conversation with two of his ministers, I waited in a little drawing-room. In an adjacent study, the door of which was ajar, a French General was speaking to two groups of his countrymen; they were asking him to formulate answers to two very different questions (we were meeting in Boulogne to discuss the war with Turkey and the reparations question, which implied also the military idea of the Ruhr occupation), when, all of a sudden, the General got up and said in a politely sardonical tone of voice: "I do not know, gentlemen, whether you are intelligent enough to discuss two problems at the same time; I am not."

As it always happens with me, I was struck by his voice; clear but deep, grave but lovable, which is not frequently found among his countrymen, where the voices are generally head-voices.

Our intercourse in Boulogne marked the beginning of our friendship, helped as it was by finding ourselves on the same side of the question during the discussion which was mainly on the Turkish problem.

Lloyd George wanted to have all of us embarked on an open and complete support of the Greek schemes for an extermination war against the Turks of Angora; Millerand, who really wanted British support for the French policy toward Germany, did not dare to disagree entirely with his British colleague. I alone did so, and warned Lloyd George of the mortal risks to which he was exposing not only Greece but also the Great Powers which would incur the responsibility of having created at Athens confidence in a support which, in the hour of danger for Greece, would certainly not materialize.

After my first speech in this vein, during the interval for tea, Foch came to me and said: "I thank you, *Monsieur le Ministre,* as a soldier. How can these gentlemen dream of situations which may entail danger of war for us, as if, after four years of trenches to defend our countries, it would be possible to think of mobilizations for diplomatic interests in the Near East."

Thus, during the first serious conversation we had together, Foch spoke to me like a statesman, while the biggest among the "frocks"—as General Wilson used to call the civilians—had spoken in the style and with the mentality of a soldier.

It was the new one, of the two Fochs, who spoke thus: a Foch as different as possible from the Bonaparte type.

One month later, at the Spa Conference, we happened to

agree again on a most thorny question—although the agreement was, this time, more on technical grounds than for moral reasons. For this time, the question was Germany; and here the old Foch, with his deep-rooted passions, had withstood the evolution of the new one. Confronted as we were with the problem of German reparations, a strong current of opinion in France was exercising violent pressure upon the government in order to secure "pledges." And pledges meant the Ruhr and the Ruhr occupation.

Millerand measured exactly all the dangers of such a course, but he was urged on by the dreams of the Chamber, the blue-horizon Chamber as it was called, after the color of the war uniforms of the French Army, elected as it had been on the illusions and enthusiasms of the immediate post-war period. Fear of the Chamber is frequently, in a parliamentary régime, the *initium sapientiæ* for the prime minister. That is why Millerand looked at Spa much more pro-Ruhr than he really was.

When my turn came to expound the Italian point of view I said that I admitted of the Ruhr threat only as a means of placing in the hands of the German Government—more well-meaning then than strong—an instrument of pressure against the Ruhr magnates and the nationalistic factions, but nothing more.

True to discipline as ever, Foch kept silent continually; but we spent part of the evening together, and he opened his mind to me.

"I will not," he said to me, "judge your political and juridical scruples; but I was glad you contributed toward the warding off of the Ruhr danger, mainly for this reason: at home, they think of the Ruhr step not as one of the strokes of a great and far-seeing political scheme, but quite simply, as something to do. Worse still: Parliament wants something to do; the government wants to look as if it were

doing something. And then, if they do something, they will want it to look big and theatrical; whereas, for me, I do certainly conceive of putting the screws on Germany, but one does not necessarily, therefore, have to stir up the whole of that hornet's nest; it would be quite enough to limit ourselves to occupying a very small part, but a vital one; *un gage sur un gage* (pledge on a pledge)."

*"Un gage sur un gage";* very often, in the years that followed, did he repeat to me the formula I had witnessed in birth. His mind clear and lucid, his language colored and often a little crude, united in such terse expressions which he would then use continually. This was no old man's dotage. It was prompted by an urgent craving of his mind to fit his mental guiding-marks into the mathematical mode of reasoning, where formulæ for ever repeat themselves.

At the time this was still fairly far-seeing. But, when, three years later, the occupation did happen, the illusions and the passions of the old Foch got the upper hand again. He began to hope that out of the occupation, and out of the dangerous and childish separatist game in the Palatinate, something might come that would lead toward the realization of the genuine old French dream: the *Two Germanies.*

I had left Paris a little while before Poincaré had, in his mind, decided upon the great stroke; but I had seen the idea ripen within him during the frequent conversations that I, as ambassador to France, had had with him in all the preceding months. The certainty I felt that Poincaré was contemplating a step which would, I feared, delay the pacification of Europe, made me leave with less regret my work in France when, upon the coming to power of Fascism, I resigned.[1]

But I kept on going to Paris fairly frequently; and I saw

[1]See chapter on Curzon.

Foch more than once. I was surprised to find that he shared certain hopes, reviving again in France, as to the possibility of separatism in the Rhineland. As before, he discussed quite readily with me even very delicate French questions, for he knew that my objections, my doubts, my irony even, if I dare say so, were prompted by a deep sympathy for France.

"Do you remember, my dear Marshal," said I, "the warm and friendly message you sent me in Rome toward the end of 1920, when, with the Treaty of Rapallo, I ended at last the old sour dispute between Italy and Yugo-Slavia. You understood so well, then, and you told me so, that the originality and the merit of my negotiation consisted in the fact that all the concessions in land and population which I had gained from Yugo-Slavia, were given freely by the Yugo-Slav Government in exchange for other advantages and other guarantees they were getting from Italy. I remember that you wrote me these very words: 'Your predecessors looked as if they wanted, on your Oriental frontier, only solutions which would raise up against them a new Austria, a new everlasting enemy; you have reversed the situation; and you are going to create there, for Italy, Allies—and markets.' Why should what is true for Italy on the Adriatic cease to be true between the Vosges and the Rhine?"

Questions that remained unanswered; as I had known they would.

Foch, so clear-minded in almost all the present international and military problems, refused to look into the essential truths of the Franco-German problem, or rather, he would see only one side of them. Can it be that too great a love is a danger?

Foch, conservative though he was, had gaged, and still did, the Russian question accurately; and he had smiled

from the beginning at the anti-Bolshevik expeditions dear to Churchill's heart. "So intelligent," he used to say, "but so journalistic." He had seen through the Turkish adventure from the first, in Boulogne. More meritorious still, he, practically alone of his cast and of his set, was right on the Austrian question, upon which the minds of the fashionable and diplomatic French world still entertained so many sickly, cloudy dreams and regrets.

"The Habsburg Empire," he remarked, "has fallen to pieces through the war. But it was an anachronism; it could not last any longer. Czechs, Serbs, Croats were ripe for freedom. If not from outside it would have perished from inside. Why, then, all these longings for a thing doomed to death? With all their faults and shortcomings the new successor States are living entities at least."

A like train of thoughts and observations might have led him to acknowledge that it was impossible to go back to the Two Germanies and that, if one had to admit of a powerful united Germany, it was wiser to come to terms with her. But here the new Foch had not succeeded in overruling the old one.

His struggle with Clemenceau for different peace terms with Germany belongs henceforth to history. It lasted from the Armistice on till the signature of the Treaty of Versailles. Like Cato for Carthage in ancient Rome, he went on, during all those fateful months, repeating and writing: "We must have the left bank of the Rhine; no British or American help is strong enough or could arrive in time to prevent new disasters in our northern French plains, or Paris from being in danger again; the Rhine, therefore, is, and will always be, the only indispensable barrier for the safety of France and of Western Europe—and for the safety of civilization." Those last six words were the only concession he was making—the honest, blunt

man, who hated words that sounded empty to him—to what he considered silly democratic and Wilsonian illusions of the time. But he felt it his duty to endure everything—even democratic jargon—not to neglect chances to help the cause of France as he conceived it.

Indifferent to success and to glory, at any rate as far as he himself was concerned, having nothing, as living mainsprings of his being, but a rare devotion to duty and a boundless love for France, he never resented any criticism that might have been addressed to him. On the other hand, he could not be stopped once the conversation bore on the long and empirical concoction of the Versailles Treaty. He went on, giving what he thought was the proof of the worthlessness of the guarantees exacted by the Versailles Treaty, since "the Allies," as he would say when speaking with an Englishman or with me, an Italian, "had not kept in their hands the bridge-heads of the Rhine."

One day I objected: "You say the Allies. But all alliances have an end; were you not afraid that a joint occupation might have added to the permanent German danger a new element of allied pressure or blackmail on you?"

Or again: "But then, one must have the courage to admit that the League of Nations is nothing but a show, and that the entrance of Germany at Geneva, as an equal among equals, is a piece of staging devoid of any meaning."

To these objections, and to others like them, he answered nothing. He just looked, with his magnificent blue eyes so full of courage and conviction. And in his eyes I could read the secret answer: "Poor fellow, you have not seen two invasions of France as I have."

One psychological and historical curiosity I had been unable to solve with him. How was it, relentless as he had been and as he remained about the necessity of the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine, that he had been so leni-

Marshal Foch talking with Count Sforza in the garden of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

ent, or, at least, so comparatively lenient, with the terms of the Armistice? There is no doubt, indeed, that in spite of what the frocks might have thought in Paris, as in London and in Rome, it would not have been difficult for him to go on pursuing the retreating German Armies, to surround them, or break them to pieces, in the very heart of Germany, who would then have known too the terrible sufferings and the terrible lesson of invasion.

Every time I had put the conversation on this matter he had justified himself on the grounds of humanity, of "needless bloodshed," that the enemy had already been constantly beaten during the last two months of the war and so on. Which was all very true, but somehow, to me, not quite convincing.

On a sunny and quiet October day, after one of our weekly meetings at the Quai d'Orsay, for the Ambassadors' Conference, we went together for a walk in the gardens which surround the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We both liked these gardens; and when we had to talk we used frequently to escape there, far from the stuffy atmosphere of the Quai d'Orsay salons, so full of Gobelins, of tapestries, of mirrors, of clocks, of glittering chandeliers, of monograms of Louis-Philippe.

We spoke again of the Armistice; polemics had been revived at the time on these questions. Foch deeply loved nature; he always felt happier in a wood or in a park than in a drawing-room or in an office. Is that why he finally decided to give something different from the usual answer?

"How is it you do not see, dear Count, that it is not that I am giving reasons which are untrue; but merely that, if there are other reasons, they may possibly not be good to tell? Well, let us suppose for a moment that the reasons I have hitherto given had not been potent enough to stop my forward march—which is not the case; I should have gone

on; I should have entered into Germany; I should have had all these fellows at my mercy. Yes, but meanwhile time passed; the flood of American troops went on pouring into France; my troops were becoming more exhausted, and by the time I came home again, I should have found France militarily occupied by a foreign Power. From a military standpoint, we should have counted less than we did at the Peace Conference."

It is not certain that these fears were as evident as Foch thought they were. One may argue upon his patriotic preoccupations, upon his French bias. But there again, even if he was erring, he was showing the rare mettle of his soul: the militarily minded chief ordinarily thinks, alas, of his triumphs, of the triumph of his armies; and then? Then, let the civilians unravel the knots. He, Foch, gives up a joy that must have been very sweet to him who at nineteen left school to join the army and fight against the invader; gives up the chances of battles and victories on German soil, which a Bonaparte could never have given up. He gives them up because his glory, his passions, his fondest dreams are nothing to him as soon as there is any possibility, be it ever so remote, of the interests of France being at stake.

# X

## Cadorna, The Iron Rule

MEMBER of an old Piedmontese family that had always served the House of Savoy, Count Cadorna, Commander-in-Chief of the Italian Army from the day of its entry into the war until November, 1917, was a soldier by breeding, temperament and tradition. His father, in September, 1870, had commanded the Italian troops that seized Rome; his son, then a lieutenant in an artillery regiment, was at his side.

A normal career brought Cadorna, who in 1870 was eighteen years old, to the post of commander-in-chief of the general staff in 1914, on the eve of the European conflict. He reorganized the army and prepared it for the great trial—and in May, 1915, when it went to war against Austria-Hungary, he became its commander-in-chief, under the nominal Supreme Command of the King.

I shall give further on in detail[1] the diplomatic errors that rendered Cadorna's task even more difficult. They are all summed up in that narrow conception of Baron Sonnino's: to make of the Italian intervention a war exclusively directed against Austria, with aims that not only had not been brought into harmony with those of Austria's other direct enemies, such as the Serbians, but that even partly thwarted some of the Slav aspirations. This private war, inserted in a more general one, apparently made Cadorna's task easier; in reality, it brought him an increase of difficulties.

[1]See chapter on Sonnino.

He felt it, for he himself wrote: "This is not a localized war between Italy and Austria-Hungary; it is a general war, wherein Russia and Serbia share with us the same final objectives on the enemy territory: the three armies must therefore act together at the same time for the common final aims." And he added: "When these three armies will have overthrown Austria, Germany reduced to her sole means will have to give in at once."

This was clear-sighted. It was not his fault if Russia suffered a terrible reverse precisely on the eve of Italy's entrance into the war. However, he is not quite free of all responsibility, owing to the fact that he failed to insist with Sonnino that the Treaty of London, which the latter negotiated as the basis of Italian intervention, should not work against his strategical conception of the conduct of the war. Sonnino was able to include Dalmatia among the future annexations exacted by Italy in the face of Cadorna's advice to the contrary, Cadorna declaring that Dalmatia would, once conquered, be indefensible. It would, however, have been far more difficult for the Italian Minister to have no misgivings about certain clauses if the Commander-in-Chief had previously advised him that they might lessen the strength of the Serbian attacks against Austria, and, especially, that they might give the Vienna Government a means of making their Slav troops believe they were fighting a pretended Italian imperialism.

Military critics have accused Cadorna of having been too slow in the first war operations, when—war having been declared—Austria had not yet had time to strengthen herself sufficiently on the Italian front. I do not share their opinion. It may well be that the first leap would have brought him nearer Trieste. But their criticism, I am afraid, has its origin—so much is military science, which should be based on experience, fettered with formulæ—in

one of Bonaparte's maxims: "The worst course in war is the course inspired by too much prudence."

Now, Cadorna could not but know that a brilliant initial advance on Trieste itself would not mean anything decisive in the course of the war; and that the war would only be won by the destruction of the Austrian forces, which would have changed the World War into a mere siege of Germany. The loss of Trieste would not have meant much for Austria since we already had the command of the sea. The ten battles Cadorna gave to the Austro-Hungarian Armies accomplished their aim, which was to destroy the Austrian force. Given the exceptionally difficult theater of operations of the Italian Armies—that stony Carso where each hill with its caverns constituted a natural fortress—the battles could only be tactical victories; but the supreme objective was reached nevertheless.

The merit of army and people who persisted in this sanguinary and apparently useless task is enormous, even if the tradition of spectacular events which makes up military history has sometimes prevented that full justice be rendered to the terrible duel.

The Austro-Hungarian Army, indeed, did not any less heroically accomplish its terrible duty. It had a dreadful task: to keep bound to a deadly and extenuating siege-war Italians and Serbians on the one hand, Russians and Rumanians on the other. With the fetishism entertained by friend and foe toward the German military machinery, there is a tendency to forget that the value of the Austro-Hungarian effort may be measured by the fact that it is only thanks to the continuity of that effort that the German Armies were able to develop freely the constantly recurring "maneuvers along interior lines of communication" wherein lay the unique secret of Germany's triumphs—until the day when the framework collapsed. The German and Austro-

German Armies covered themselves with military glory by destroying first the Rumanians, then the Serbians, then the Russians; they could even, for a moment, believe in October-November, 1917, that they had also destroyed the Italian Armies at the battle of Caporetto. But all those victories had been won because the Austrian Armies desperately defended the edges of the gigantic chessboard.

No one would ever have questioned Cadorna's merit in this thankless and all the more heroic undertaking of the slow destruction of the Austrian forces, had it not been for the battle of Caporetto.

If Caporetto weighs more heavily on Cadorna's name than Charleroi on Joffre's—all the Allied Commands underwent similar disasters—it is because Cadorna chose to account for his defeat by alleging the existence of moral causes independent of his own will. For any one who, like myself, knew him well, his sincerity is unquestionable. But it has been proved beyond question that the breach in the long semicircular Italian front line was due essentially to military errors. There were, along some of the Alpine passes, gaps in the Italian defenses, and it is through one of these that the Germans and Austrians passed, after a storm of artillery such as had not yet been witnessed on any front.

The moral reasons that Cadorna invoked as the explanation of his failure were, according to him, the pacifist propaganda made by the Socialists on the one side and, on the other, by Pope Benedict XV with his message about the "useless carnage" that preceded Caporetto by three months. What is worse for Cadorna's moral reputation, in his communiqué after the defeat, he tried to impute the success of the German invasion to this supposed crisis in the morale of his troops. I heard his blasphemous communiqué on board an Italian destroyer on which I was crossing the Adriatic on October twenty-ninth, chased by enemy submarines, having

been summoned by Sonnino to confer with him in Rome; the German and Austrian wireless were giving the world news of their victory and, to enhance its importance even more, were quoting Cadorna's words. If the horror I felt at hearing a general clearing himself by attacking his army did not turn into fear for my country, it is because I had had a chance of knowing the man; I had admired his qualities of endurance, of silent courage, of authority; but I knew also that he was egocentric, autolatrical, and that—deprived as he was of all flexibility and imagination—incapable as he was of "seeing too many things at once," he could, in all good faith, have believed that the mistake and the responsibility rested with the others—the damned civilians.

Now, moral causes did really exist which—although in feeble proportions—contributed to the giving way of the Italian front, in the same proportion that other moral causes contributed to the French defeats of that same year, 1917. But the moral causes consisted only to an extremely small extent in the "defeatist" messages of the Pope, or in the campaign of Socialist agitators who used the dreadful and stupid "*our* dead, *their* war." The essential and direct moral causes bear one name: Cadorna.

Cadorna, as hard on others as he was on himself, was really a general of the days of Louis XIV risen again in the twentieth century. Chief of a professional army where discipline was maintained by dint of hanging and of flogging, one of those armies of Condé or of Eugène of Savoy, he might have done wonders in the elaborate sieges we admire on old war-pictures. War, indeed, he conceived of as a gigantic siege operation; filled with a sort of mystical sadism, he held that it was a supreme honor for a regiment to hold out indefinitely in the trenches; the changes and reliefs practised in the English and French Armies seemed to

him democratic mawkishness. With the war, this trend of his mind changed into brutality; the genuine strength of his character into an exaggeration of that fatal attitude of silent anger with which he kept off the advice of civilians.

Cadorna became all-powerful with the middle-class Italians who seemed inclined to believe that a hard jaw is a sign of genius, and that brutality is a proof of energy; but the millions of men at the front drew other conclusions. They were paying for their knowledge with their own blood. They were not a professional army, as he believed, but a people in arms; and they saw themselves cut off from the rest of the nation, with no regular and periodical leave on which to see their families, and insufficiently fed. The slightest fault was punished with decimations. (An inquest presided over by an army general, Caneva, proved that soldiers were shot in decimations who had not even been present on the day the fault they were being punished for had been committed, and that volunteers had been shot who had come from abroad to join the Italian Army.)

This psychological misunderstanding of the moral needs of a modern army, in which soldiers always remain citizens, was Cadorna's chief mistake. Ready himself to submit to an iron rule, he did not understand that the masses are swayed by other laws.

Overbearing, autocratic, he had, after Caporetto, the merit of having, with unfailing serenity, gone on giving orders for the making of a new front line along the River Piave where the Italian troops had stayed their retreat and had once more engaged in battle. When Foch came to the new Italian front for a rapid visit he had, after a long survey of the maps, a short discussion with Cadorna:

*"Il faut envoyer là de l'artillerie."*

And Cadorna: *"C'est fait."*

*"Il faut masser là des réserves."*

*"C'est fait."*

After a long series of *"C'est fait,"* Foch rose and said: "But everything is all right again."

It was, even more so than Cadorna thought; but that was one of those moral miracles which were beyond Cadorna's imagination. His *c'est fait* had so rapidly materialized because on that left bank of the Piave, now sacred for all Italians, all the units, and even the troops which were still disorganized, had said to themselves, as a sort of mysterious command, that the enemies must not go farther on Italian soil; that here they must fight and die.

If Cadorna understood then that the wonderful new unity of national spirit sprang from a free impulse of the mind, whereas all his decimations had been in vain, it must, for a moment, have made him doubt his whole conception of life and of men.

An autocrat who is seized with doubts is nothing but a wreck.

## XI

### Diaz, Common Sense

WITH Cadorna exploded on the Italian front the myth of the "strong silent man" just as it had exploded twelve months earlier with Joffre on the French front. But if the French had the luck of performing this operation twelve months before the Italians, they had the misfortune of replacing Joffre by some one who had been over-advertised as a thunderbolt of war: Nivelle. The result was the bloody defeat of the Chemin des Dames.

After the trial of Caporetto, after the immediate re-establishment by the Italians of their line of resistance on the Piave, Cadorna was deposed from his command and honorably relegated to Versailles, whither he was sent as the representative for Italy on the new Inter-Allied Supreme Council. In the same way, for essentially analogous reasons—assertion of infallibility, waste of human lives, discontent among the troops—Joffre had been removed from real command with the pompous but empty title of "Commander-in-Chief of the French Forces" and, a few weeks later, definitely put aside with that of Field-Marshal.

In Rome, meanwhile, Orlando had succeeded the decrepit Boselli as prime minister. Orlando's first task was the choosing of a man to whom the Italian Army could be entrusted at a time when the retreat had been checked, when the troops were fighting heroically, but when the Austro-German offensive was going on furiously to break through the new lines of resistance.

Those days saw the dawn of a stupendous revival of national union and faith. The enemy having invaded the Venetian plains, forty million Italians joined in one same purpose: to drive the Germans out of Italy once more; the moral unanimity of 1848.

Arriving in Rome from Corfu on the day following the Caporetto rout, I succeeded in going north at once; my three brothers were all in the firing line. I saw, on my way, the usual stream of wretched refugees flying before the enemy as the Belgians and the French had done. Then finally I saw our new front on the Piave. I felt at once that Italy had vanquished her foes. Never before had I seen the men so doggedly determined. On all their faces there seemed to be written: "It is our homes we defend; the enemy must not get through." Italy was victorious in apparent defeat.

When, immediately after the Armistice, I went to Constantinople (November, 1918) as high commissioner, I discovered that my feeling had been shared by foreigners who had judged the situation better than men did, at the time, in Berlin and in Vienna and, possibly, in London and Paris. Everything was on sale in Constantinople when I arrived there with an Italian squadron; it was easy for me to obtain copies of old deliberations of the Sublime Porte. The tragic and beautiful days came back to my mind when I read an ostentatious, self-satisfied report of the Austro-German successes on our Alps, which ended with a request for a Turkish detachment to share in the occupation—described as imminent and certain—of Venice. The Austro-Germans imagined perhaps that a Turkish flag floating on the Piazza San Marco would help to break the spirit of the Italians.

The blunt answer of the Grand Vizier Talaat Pasha was:

"This is our greatest defeat since the Marne; if the Italians have succeeded in making a stand after such a reverse it means that they believe in final victory, and that the Austro-German triumph, great as it may seem, is merely a tactical success."

But if such was, and later on turned out to have been, the truth, it was natural, then, that the responsible government in Rome should feel the gravity of the situation, while the attacks of the enemy succeeded one another furiously against the new and still untried Piave front line.

"The Italians," Conrad, the Austrian Commander-in-Chief, declared at that time, "are like people who hang on to planks for their lives, with the strength of despair; enough to cut off their fingers, and they will all fall off."

It is in this situation that Diaz was chosen to succeed Cadorna.

He was—the unknown general. A man between fifty and sixty, Diaz was born in Naples in 1861; an officer in the regular army, he had gone normally from promotion to promotion; a good soldier wounded in the Tripolitania war where he had served as colonel; commander of the Twenty-third Army Corps since June, 1917, he had led a successful operation on the Selo which was, however, but a part of a more comprehensive action; such was the man. A new man, thus unhampered by precedents, silent, with neither pretentions nor genius—he struck Orlando, when one of my friends suggested his name to him, as the very opposite of Cadorna. Orlando submitted Diaz's name to the King, who approved the choice. The choice was simply the result of a general weariness which Cadorna's violent personality had produced everywhere.

But it was felt immediately that if patient steadiness in the effort of resistance was asked of Diaz, some spirit of initiative also must be placed next him. General Badog-

lio was therefore chosen as chief of staff.[1] A novel case in Italy, the Neapolitan Diaz was to represent stolid reflection, and the Piedmontese Badoglio, imagination and daring.

Although ten years Diaz's junior, Badoglio who had begun the war as lieutenant-colonel, had become, in 1917, by a series of rapid promotions on the battle-field, lieutenant-general, commander of an army corps, like Diaz himself. His army corps, the Twenty-seventh, had, as it happens, held the very sector through which the Austro-Germans had made their first breach on October 25, 1917, and through which the whole invasion had poured. It is to Orlando's credit that he did not, on this account, disqualify Badoglio. I had Badoglio as military expert for the conclusion of the Treaty of Rapallo, in 1920, and in our conversations he never admitted that he had, in those days, committed serious errors; but if he did do so, as some maintain, it gave him all the more poise when he occupied his new post of highest responsibility. The burning recollections of past risks made him humbler and more prudent; his natural ardor gained in manliness by it. From November, 1917, until the final victory a year later, Diaz and Badoglio made up an inseparable binomial. The case presents, for once, a refutal of the legends that a single mind can alone mature victories.

Diaz and Badoglio started on their joint command with two great advantages, despite the tremendous losses of Caporetto. I have already shown one: the spontaneous and ardent revival of the spirit of resistance among the whole Italian people, the very opposite of what had been anticipated in Berlin and in Vienna. The other was a material advantage: the shortness of the Piave line enabled the

[1] As the title of commander-in-chief belonged theoretically to the King, Diaz, like Cadorna, was simply styled officially chief of the general staff. Badoglio was the under chief.

Italian Army to draw itself up depthwise and to concentrate its reserves in such a manner that they could be more easily handled.

Diaz had begun his command on November eighth. Three days later the enemy resumed with the utmost violence his offensive against the new Piave line and on the Alpine plateau of Asiago. The attack lasted three weeks; along the whole line of the improvised Italian defenses, the Austrians sought to force a passage which alone would have given a decisive value to their October victory. Toward the middle of December, after a short lull due to the strain that the attacking armies had been put to, owing to the superhuman resistance of the Italians, the offensive started once more and lasted until the end of December, 1917. Then only did the Austrians at last realize the truth: they would not get through; at least not for the time being.

During those two months, on each day of which Italy's fate hung in the balance, Diaz, the unknown man of yesterday, appeared as the man of destiny. He knew the Italians were determined to hold out, he knew that there was no stroke of genius to attempt—that it was solely a question of holding out and of dying. He succeeded in incarnating this spirit; he succeeded in radiating an infectious atmosphere of fatalistic optimism.

January, 1918, brought in four months of snows and storms that made a precious natural rampart. Diaz, behind this screen, did not lose time; not only did he, with Badoglio, reorganize technically both the army and the defenses, but he managed to keep up among the combatants that fever of patriotic passion born of the danger their country had run in November, 1917.

He did what Cadorna had never condescended to do, in his *ancien régime* stubbornness; and he did it precisely because he did not overrate himself. I mean that he allowed

all the free spiritual energies to flow toward the soldiers; he instituted for all the large units propaganda offices to explain to the men the moral aims of the war. He had them told why they should be glad to fight and die now in order that their sons should know no more wars (which, for Cadorna, would have been sheer blasphemy); Wilson's newly come message was spread as widely as possible; newspapers of all opinions were allowed to circulate freely in the trenches.

But it was in the organization of the propaganda among the enemy that Diaz showed he understood the moral requisites of the war against Austria, in a manner Sonnino and Cadorna had never done. Diaz accepted the idea for which I had vainly struggled during the two previous years from Corfu, to organize a propaganda service mainly destined to show the sympathy of Italian democracy for the cause of the nationalities oppressed in Austria and in Hungary; and to use for that service the collaboration of Czech and Yugo-Slav prisoners and deserters. He encouraged the formation of Czechoslovakian legions on our front; and he deplored Sonnino's veto on the formation of analogous Yugo-Slav legions. Diaz knew that I, from Corfu, was urging this measure on Sonnino, a measure which would at last have provoked a deep moral uneasiness among the Slovene and Croat troops, still fighting so stubbornly against us; and, with all due regard for discipline, he sent me word that he hoped I would insist.

All this was obvious, of course, but obvious things are frequently overlooked; and indeed, under Cadorna's purely military régime, they were.

On its side the government in Rome was powerfully aiding Diaz in this new policy. Taking advantage of the revival of enthusiasm for resistance the Minister of the Treasury, Nitti, floated a loan which was called the Victory

Loan, and which quickly mounted to six milliard lire, much to the world's astonishment.

Having thus felt how the country freely responded, the government allowed Diaz to give sums to the chiefs of all the regiments with which to help, without wounding their pride, the families of officers and soldiers. Every combatant, worried by the conditions of his family, could, in all safety, ask his chief for pecuniary help.

Every officer and every soldier was given a life and a death insurance. In case of death, they knew that a sum of money would be paid in to their family at once; if they lived, they knew they were, on being demobilized, to find a sum of money to help them take up their regular work again. An organization was also founded on behalf of the combatants *(Opera Nazionale per i Combattenti)* with a capital of three hundred million lire and possibilities of developing a scheme of wide social scope.

The Italian is, essentially, a homing-bird; those measures—which Cadorna had never thought of—did much toward keeping up the morale of the troops, who felt that their homes were being looked after. (It is perhaps difficult for foreigners to realize how cruel had been the suffering of the soldiers' families during the war, especially in southern Italy.)

As Diaz's lucky star would have it, after the winter the Austrians decided to attack the Italian Army again with all their forces (June, 1918). On the other side of the trenches, in Italy, where it was better known than in Vienna how much the Caporetto disaster had fortified our troops, signs of impatience were manifested here and there, because Diaz did not engage a decisive battle quickly enough. Italy is the land where Fabius Maximus was called the Cunctator (the procrastinator) because, after the defeat of the Romans at Trasimene (217 B.C.), he had urged prudence

as the secret of final victory over Hannibal. For Diaz, as for Fabius, events changed the jest into a title of glory.

The battle of the Piave (June 15-23, 1918) is the greatest the Austro-Hungarian Armies waged in five years of war. All the forces of the Monarchy—sixty divisions—found themselves for the first time united in one single aim: the destruction of the Italian Army, about ten divisions less numerous than they. The leaders in Berlin and Vienna thought that with Italy destroyed the Flanders front would quickly be broken in by the combined efforts of the two Central Empires.

The secret of the tactics that Diaz and Badoglio adopted during the battle of the Piave was, never to let their troops fight in advanced positions, but to reserve the counter-attacking effort for the intermediary zones to which the enemy was allowed to advance. New artillery tactics did the rest. The Austrians themselves admitted a loss of two hundred thousand men, two hundred guns, two thousand machine-guns. But they lost something even more important in that battle: all hope of ever being able to vanquish the Italian Army.

The Italians paid as price for this victory of the Piave, ninety thousand men. Henceforth Diaz the Cunctator rejected all suggestion of "adventure" as he termed it. He thought, as Foch did, that the decisive crisis of the war would come during the spring of 1919 and wanted to have his troops fully efficient for that time.

Late in the summer, on the Macedonian front where I was, I had come to the conclusion—I had seen there many Austrian deserters, even officers—that if the outward crust of Emperor Karl's Army was still strong, the Austrian Monarchy was ripe for disruption. I therefore insisted pressingly with Sonnino for a new offensive; and I found him in full agreement with me. Diaz objected that it was unneces-

sary to take any risks; but once more, events got the better of the plans of chief commanders. The imminent collapse of the Balkan front decided the Italian offensive. The battle began on October twenty-fourth. The resistance of the Austrians on the Italian front was still so stubborn that in four days Italian losses mounted to forty thousand men. But it was the resistance of what I, from the Balkans, had described as "the crust." A little later, the Austrian defeat outlined itself. The Austrians did not withstand the rapid advance of General Caviglia's army on their flanks. On the thirtieth the enemy front on the Grappa gave in. Defeat turned to rout. On the fourth of November, the end had come.

Caviglia, not unreasonably, claimed the merit of this final victory; just as Badoglio had certainly been the main artizan of the Piave victory.

If one said that Diaz was the wise coordinator of the efforts and decisions of his lieutenants, and cleverly turned favorable circumstances to account, one would, in truth, have said much already. But it would be too much to say that Diaz gave his name to victory more as a notary than as a protagonist and that, as commander-in-chief, he played no other part than that assigned by Thiers to the constitutional king who *"règne et ne gouverne pas."*

Diaz as an historical problem must be considered from a different angle.

He has been the right man for an extremely critical and psychologically involved situation, wherein certain qualities, mediocre, and in some cases, negative, assumed a positive value in themselves and in their results.

The whole period of Diaz's command establishes that, in modern warfare, a great problem of social economics and psychology has superimposed itself on the strategical problem. In November and December, 1917, on the Piave, in

June and October, 1918, victory did not smile on one chief gifted with any special genius of his own; victory had crowned the collective preparation and—more still—the moral unanimity of all Italians, officers, soldiers and, behind them, the whole nation.

If there is any merit in having conceived, or willed, or encouraged, the military and moral coordination of the efforts of that great human and social mass which the Italian Army represented, and that merit undoubtedly exists, it must be ascribed to Diaz—to his practical mind and to his moral character, free of jealousies and personal concerns.

To the great lessons of humility that the European tragedy should have given to our plastic taste for heroism, another should still be added: the twilight of the war gods.

## XII

### Pius X and Benedict XV, The Two Popes of the War

THE Popes of the war were two: Pius X, who died on August 20, 1914, and Benedict XV, who succeeded him and whose pontificate witnessed the whole war and peace. Two legends, more tenacious than history, have grown up round the two men. That of Piux X has him praying and striving that the war may not break out, horrified at the thought of Christendom divided into two hostile camps, and finally dying broken-hearted at the news of the Belgian horrors. The legend of Benedict XV, especially the one prevalent in France, shows him simply as a diplomat convinced of the triumph of Germany, wishing for the success of the Central Empires.

The time has come to dispel both legends, the first of which is false from beginning to end, and the second biased and psychologically inaccurate.

During the World War, the questions of religion and of Church played but a very minor part; on both sides there were Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox, on both sides there were Moslems. Catholic unity failed as had the Moslem which seemed so sure of its Jihad, the Holy War proclaimed by the Sultan and of which neither the Arabs nor the Moslem Indians took any notice. The clergy of the various armies could all invoke the same God Almighty for the most conflicting aims.

One fact, however, shocked Europe during the fateful days of July and August, 1914: that war was let loose

upon the world, in the name of God, by a decrepit but powerful Prince, Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary, the most Catholic of all sovereigns, and the most powerful of all Catholic sovereigns. When this Prince, who used even in his eighties to follow for hours bareheaded, in Vienna, the Corpus Domini procession, declared that he was making war to punish Serbia, millions of pious souls thought that the Pope might step in to prevent the curse. The hope gave birth to the legend. It was then said that Pius X, as soon as the ultimatum to Serbia became known, enjoined his Nuncio in Vienna to beg and admonish the old Emperor and King in the name of the Almighty. Then, seeing that war broke out after all, it was said that the diplomats of the Ballplatzhaus and the Emperor's military Cabinet, had prevented the Pope's envoy from speaking with his Majesty. Closing act of the legend: the Pope having died suddenly on August twentieth, during the first month of the war, it was maintained that the good Pius had died of a broken heart, having had to acknowledge his inability to avert the disaster.

The plain truth is, on the contrary, simply this:

As soon as the danger of war became evident, the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires to the Vatican, Count Palffy, several times enlightened the Secretary of State of Pius X, Cardinal Merry del Val, as to the intentions and "duties" of the Monarchy. The Cardinal's answers were reproduced in the dispatches of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy; Count Palffy's dispatches, which I have read, prove that the Vatican eyed with favor, at any rate at the beginning, an undertaking by which the ruin of Serbia would have entailed a mortification, and consequently a diminution of influence, for Russia, whose prestige was abhorred by the Roman Church as the main obstacle to the conciliation of the Eastern Orthodox Churches with the See of Rome. In these con-

versations the Secretary of State spoke explicitly in the name of the Pope who—so he declared to the Austrian diplomat—deplored that Vienna had not inflicted sooner on the Serbians the punishment they deserved.[1]

The widening of the conflict that from Austro-Serbian became European, did not contribute much toward a change of attitude on the part of the Pope. In his honest but narrow mind, the march of the German Armies *nach Paris* took the shape of a punishment inflicted on the degenerate "eldest daughter of the Church" who had given him the worst worries of his pontificate.

This will seem exaggerated only to those who have not known the real character of Pius X. Sprung from the humblest classes of the people, endowed like all Venetians with a

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[1]Enough to quote the following passage from a dispatch from Count Palffy to Count Berchtold, dated July twenty-ninth: "During the visit I paid two days ago to the Cardinal Secretary of State, the latter naturally led the conversation on to the great problems and the questions that are today engrossing Europe. But it was impossible to feel, in the remarks made by His Eminence, any particular spirit of indulgence or conciliation. While he characterized as very sharp the note addressed to Serbia, he yet approved of it unreservedly, and indirectly expressed the hope that the Monarchy would see the matter through to the end. Undoubtedly, thought the Cardinal, it is a pity that Serbia could not have been *humbled* sooner, for then it could have been done without bringing into play such tremendous possibilities. This declaration also corresponds to the Pope's manner of thought, for, during these last years, His Holiness has several times deplored that Austria-Hungary should have neglected to punish her dangerous Danubian neighbor.

"One might wonder why the Catholic Church shows such a warlike spirit at a time when she is directed by a chief who is a real Saint, filled with truly apostolic ideas. The answer is very simple. The Pope and the Curia see, in Serbia, the gnawing evil that has, little by little, eaten into the very marrow of the Monarchy and that would, in time, end by disintegrating it entirely. In spite of all the other experiments tried by the Curia during the last decades, Austria-Hungary is, and remains, preeminently the Catholic State, the greatest stronghold left to the Church of Christ in our century. The fall of this bulwark would mean, for the Church, the loss of her firmest support; in the struggle against Orthodoxy, she would see her most powerful champion fall.

"Thus, just as it is for Austria an immediate necessity of personal preservation to eliminate from her organism the disintegrating evil, so it is for the Catholic Church an indirect necessity to do, or approve of, anything toward that aim.

"In this sense, one can easily establish a link between apostolic feelings and a spirit of war."

merry wit and a good-natured manner that won the hearts of all, his name had ended by being synonymous with apostolic simplicity. A Milanese priest said to him, just before he went to shut himself up for the 1903 Conclave from which he came out pope: "Your Eminence will be the new pope."

And Cardinal Sarto retorted: "Oh, why do you believe that the Holy Ghost is capable of such heavy blunders?"

At the beginning of the Conclave, at one of the "general congregations," Cardinal Lécot, who happened to sit near him, asked him in French whether he was archbishop of an Italian diocese.

"I do not speak French," answered Sarto in Latin.

"Oh, then," replied Lécot, *"non es papabilis, quia papa debet Gallica loqui."*

*"Deo gratias! Deo gratias!"*[1] agreed Sarto gaily and sincerely.

But Sarto proved once again that there is a smack of demagogy in our tendency to admire peasants who have climbed to the topmost rung of the ladder, solely for their being peasants. If they are not especially gifted, like Stambulisky in post-war Bulgaria, they but too often turn out as fettered within the narrow confines of their conceptions and traditions. The prejudices of the aristocrat are often counterbalanced by his skepticism, always by his laziness. Those of the peasant have no counterpoise.

Sarto, beneath his Venetian good nature, hid a dangerous mind; all narrow minds are dangerous. He gave a proof of this at the very moment when, on being proclaimed pope, he had to choose his pontifical name. No cardinal probably had ever been so sincere as he when he declared that he did not want to become pope. That is why he answered:

[1] "You can not be pope, because a pope must speak French."
"Thank God! Thank God!"

"Since I am called to suffer, I shall take the name of the Pope who has suffered most: Pius."

Pius IX had, like Sarto, been charming, agreeable, witty, simple. But, faced with the constantly rising tide of Liberalism that characterized the nineteenth century, he found nothing else to do but to put up against it the barriers and curses of the Syllabus. When he died in 1878, the Roman Church came out isolated in the world, morally, intellectually, politically. The twelve years' pontificate of the new Pius, from 1903 to 1914, became an almost perfect replica of the situation created by Pius IX which the worldly wisdom of Leo XIII had reversed. All the priests who thought that the claims of the Church must be conciliated with those of modern democracy were violently persecuted. The storm fell with the utmost fierceness on the disciples of Father Loisy and of Father Tyrrel who were trying, within the Church, to "appeal to a Gospel interpreted in favor of religious democracy," to quote the very words of Pius X; simple words they seem to us, but Pius chose them to stigmatize what in his eyes was a crime.[1] Indeed, everything that was then called Loisyism, Tyrrellism, Americanism, was annihilated. But if a few priests, like Tyrrell and Murri, left the Church, the great majority of those who gave in hid in their hearts their doubts and their sufferings. Pius X, in the singleness of his mind, never understood the tragedy of those souls; he would say to a friend of mine, an Italian priest whom he wanted to warn against their influence: "They are proud; and no good can come of haughtiness."

Characters of this type, hard on the noblest minds whose doubts and misgivings they do not understand, very often put their whole trust in fanatics who please them with their certainties. Pius X, from the very first days of his pontifi-

[1]See his encyclical, *Pascendi,* of September 8, 1907, and his letter of August 25, 1910.

cate, gave all his confidence to Cardinal Vives y Tuto, Spaniard, Capuchin and inquisitorial. In the antechambers of the Vatican—antechambers are often disrespectful—Vives y Tuto was soon nicknamed *Vives fa tutto,* "Vives-does-everything." Vives, having lived and hated like a Spaniard of old Castilian Spain, who killed infidels for the good of their souls, ended as he had lived. In 1912, after ten years of mad persecutions which he represented to the Pope as anti-modernist zeal—and thanks to which information against a Modernist became for any scheming priest the safest means of making his way—Vives ended by showing himself such as he really was, such as no one had suspected him of being: mad, mad in the clinical sense of the word. To avoid all scandal, he was shut up in the papal Villa of Castel Gandolfo, and there he died, watched day and night by his attendants who used to hear him cry out: "The Church! The Church! I must save Her from the Modernists!" . . .

On the death of the wretched Vives, two other cardinals guided Pius X's mind: De Lai, prefect of the *Concistoriale,* from which depended the nomination of bishops, and Merry del Val, the Secretary of State.

The knowledge of the niceties and technicalities of diplomacy of his polyglot Secretary of State appeared as a sort of hermetic science to a pope of modest origin who did not even understand the Latin of the bishops *nationis Gallicæ;* one of the reasons, by the way, why he imposed on the French clergy the Italian pronunciation of Latin, so distasteful to them. Merry del Val's masterpiece was the separation between Church and State in France, which, from the point of view of the Roman Church which has small liking for the freedom inherent in separations, meant the economic destruction of the Church in France and of her missions abroad.

For Pius X, who was incapable of realizing even the tactical mistakes that were being committed in his name, the responsibility lay with France for all the failures he met with in Paris, France whom he usually termed, in intimate circles, "the diabolical Trinity of Freemasonry, Christian Democracy and Modernism." For Modernism itself his freedom of language was even more extreme, and would probably have seemed blasphemous in any other priest; he called it the *"mal francese"* of the Church.[1]

It was necessary to say all this to show why the Protestant armies of Germany seemed to Pius X a weapon chosen by God with which to punish France. When death overtook him on August twentieth he was absolutely convinced that nothing in the world could prevent the total defeat of France; and he said, in his simplicity: "It is thus they will understand that they must come back to the fold of the Church."

Just as the Nuncio's attempt in Vienna is a legend, so also is the story that Pius X died of a broken heart. I heard from his doctor, Marchiafava, an old colleague of mine in the Italian Senate, that the illness of which the Pope died had been undermining the constitution of the old Pontiff for months, and that the overwork of the last weeks could hardly have done anything more than accelerate a tempo that he, Marchiafava, had already declared to be inevitably fatal.

The real drama of the Roman Church did not take place around Pius X. It was played at the Conclave.

The majority of the cardinals who had come to Rome for the election of the new pope were in favor of the

[1]The disease which invaded Europe at the end of the fifteenth century, and which Voltaire pleasantly attributed to Columbus, was, and is still, called by the Italians *mal francese;* while the French called it *le mal napolitain,* perhaps one of the souvenirs of Charles VIII's expedition to Naples. Shakespeare sided with the Italians in *King Henry V:* "News have I that my Nell is dead i' the spital of malady of France."

Central Empires. The German and Austro-Hungarian cardinals all assumed, as if moved by an unconscious password, an identical attitude of absolute confidence in immediate victory. One of them repeated all the time to everybody: *"Cito vincemus in bello."* The Italians had nicknamed him Cito. He told the Italians that, were Italy to abandon her neutrality in order to attack the Central Empires, it might cost her her unity. Then changing from the irate to the honeyed style, he would add that, in such case, one might restore the temporal power. Cito never could understand why the Italians were unmoved by threats, but terrified as soon as they were promised temporal power. The Spaniards only, by order of Merry del Val, listened complacently to the assumption.

The proud bearing of Cardinal Mercier alone stood out against Germanic security. A little later, during the ballots, Cardinal Billot received the news that two of his nephews had been killed in action, and immediately the success of the German propaganda went down slightly among the cardinals who, like all men when they are gathered in groups, are swept by psychological waves which are not exclusively dependent on reason.

It was in this atmosphere full of contrasts that the cardinals chose as pope, Cardinal Giacomo Della Chiesa, Archbishop of Bologna.

They had not thought of him at first. He himself, in all the preceding balloting, had voted for his personal friend, Cardinal Ferrata, "France's candidate" as Poincaré says in his work *Au Service de la France.*

Della Chiesa's candidature did not come out before the fifteenth ballot, Cardinal Gasparri, a former comrade of his at the Segreteria di Stato, having taken the initiative in it. It was only on the third turn that he just secured the two-thirds of the votes required in order to be elected. It

was late in the evening. Della Chiesa's adversaries contested his election, declaring that it was necessary to prove that Della Chiesa had not voted for himself. The stating of such a doubt was legal, although irritating, and provoked a sharp debate in the Conclave. As it was getting later and later, it was decided that, on the following morning, at the first ballot, all the cardinals who had voted for Della Chiesa would, if they so wished, cast their vote for him again; proof would thus be had whether the two-thirds of the votes were reached without that of the candidate concerned who would abstain from voting.

When Della Chiesa, who had witnessed the whole discussion unmoved, retired to his cell for the night, he knew already that he was to be pope, since he had not voted for himself. On the next day, lots were drawn, and he was chosen as scrutineer. As such he noted, still unmoved, that his peers had become almost unanimous on his behalf. He read his name thirty, forty times, in a level cold voice. Once the ballot was over, he went calmly back to his seat (the only one left with a baldachin, all the others having been removed at once), and there he received the *adorazione* of the cardinals. After which he retired to the sacristy where the three ritual cassocks of different sizes, prepared by the papal tailor, were kept. The smallest was still too large for him, and had to be arranged on him with pins. But when he appeared before the altar of Michelangelo's *Judgment,* the dignity of the Head of the Church emanated from him "as if he had been pope twenty years," as Cardinal Mercier told me in 1921.

The choice of the Conclave illustrated once more one of the unwritten laws of the Roman Church: the new pope must be different from his predecessor. Pius X was shut up within the scholastic formulæ of the past, and Della Chiesa barely understood theology; Piux X himself admitted that

he knew nothing of diplomatic negotiations, and Della Chiesa was a career diplomat. Finally—for everything counts—Pius X was the son of peasants, whereas Giacomo Della Chiesa came from one of those Genoese patrician families so proud of their past that, when Genoa passed to Piedmont in 1815 and King Victor Emmanuel granted them the title of marquis, they—who, like those of Venice and of Lucca, had never condescended to bear any title—took it as a painful humiliation.

Della Chiesa himself admitted that he was a poor theologian; he had not come up from the seminaries, for he had studied at the Genoa University like all his young comrades and had thought of the priesthood only after his university years. This was what gave to his conversation a lack of unction, and to his manner of reasoning a directness that struck me as unpriestly the two or three times I met him when we were both diplomats.

Cold, reserved, ironical, I do not think he had the knack of inspiring great loves around him. His physical handicap (he was slightly hunchbacked, which, with his luminous eyes, made him look like the portraits of Leopardi) added perhaps to his reserve. But I well knew his cousin, Durazzo Pallavicino, and his most intimate friend, Baron Monti,[1] and the deep affection they bore him proves that he was not devoid of interior warmth. The Della Chiesa were relatively poor, and Durazzo Pallavicino was the richest man in Genoa; when, his university studies over, young Giacomo expressed a desire to enter the Accademia dei Nobli Ecclesiastici, the nursery of papal diplomats, it was the rich

[1]Baron Monti was one of the chief officials of the Ministry of Justice; he had to deal especially with the religious questions. The Italian Government always used to send him to the Vatican where he discreetly treated all our common questions and generally came back with good compromises. I doubt very strongly if, after what is officially called the "Conciliation," the ambassadors legally appointed will succeed in achieving anything like Monti's officious work.

cousin, Durazzo Pallavicino, who defrayed the schooling expenses. When the former student had become pope, a delegation from the Genoese nobility came to congratulate him; among them, Durazzo, who, seeing the Pope was turning to him, bowed and stammered: "Your Holiness."

And the Pope:

"You call me Holiness! But we are just the two cousins of old and nothing else."

And turning to the others:

"Gentlemen, if I am pope, here is among you the one who is responsible for it: my cousin, who paid for my schooling."

The same loyalty to friends Della Chiesa showed toward Cardinal Rampolla. Once the latter's influence had vanished, he was the only one of the Vatican diplomats to dare, each evening, to cross the gate of Saint Martha's Convent where Leo XIII's Secretary of State, the man who, but for Austria's veto, would have been pope at Leo's death, lived in solitude and oblivion. The appointment of Della Chiesa to the archbishopric of Bologna was one of those papal promotions meant to remove from the Vatican an element that seemed dangerous because it indiscreetly insisted on being faithful to a fallen friend. Only after Rampolla's death did Della Chiesa become a cardinal; it was thought undesirable, at Pius's Vatican, to have them both together in the Sacred College.

As long as he stayed in Rome as under-secretary of State, until his exile to Bologna, Della Chiesa respectfully and prudently tried to prevent the Vatican relations with France from approaching the breach and disaster toward which, according to him, the policy of Pius X and of Merry del Val was inevitably driving. His one reward was that the Pope dropped his old habit of receiving him.

On the other hand, Della Chiesa adopted no definite

attitude in the theological war let loose by Vives y Tuto. He knew he was no theologian, and kept silent. But he showed the essence of his thought—and his good sense—when, once in his diocese of Bologna, he systematically refused to show any approval of the Catholic press of the town that virulently attacked anything smacking of Christian democracy. He took refuge in abstention—still a cautious way of showing what he thought.

As soon as he became pope, he stopped dead the inquisitorial and persecuting furor that had raged at the Vatican, in the bishoprics, in the Catholic papers. In his first encyclical he expressed his firm resolution to eliminate all distinctions and accusations between Catholics, exclusively reserving to the Supreme Authority the guardianship of the faith and the right to inflict all necessary censures. To this prompt disavowal of the habits encouraged by his predecessor a personal incident perhaps contributed—men are but men, even when they are popes—an incident that happened to him personally on the morrow of his accession to the pontificate. He found on his desk all the papers marked as reserved to the Pope which had accumulated during the agony of Pius X and the Conclave; among these a long letter from Monsignor Pellizzari, Bishop of Piacenza, near Bologna, containing a regular denunciation of Della Chiesa, "suspected of Modernism."

When the Azione Cattolica, the association that constituted the main weapon of the Vatican in Italy, was reorganized, it was Benedict XV who personally gave the order that the democrats persecuted by Pius X be represented on it; and that Sturzo, the future leader of the Popular Party—now so violently hated by the Fascists and by the anti-democratic Catholics alike—become one of its directors. Again, it was thanks to the personal support of Benedict XV that Sturzo—notwithstanding the opposition

with which a strong personality always meets—was able to become general secretary of the Azione Cattolica from 1915 to 1918 and afterward head of the Segretariato Scolastico. The Pope also allowed Sturzo to carry out his idea, to constitute the confederation of Italian workmen which became known as the White Confederation. All those steps, which aimed at an ever more democratic organization of the Catholic forces, finally culminated, in November, 1919, in the abolition of the *non expedit*[1] that enabled the Popular Party to make its electoral campaigns without running the risk of any difficulties with the ecclesiastical authorities.

But of course the supreme concern of the new Pope was the war. In the field of the Entente they quickly labeled him "Pro-German" while, when he mounted to the papal throne, Austria and Germany had not considered him *persona grata;* was he not a creature of Rampolla? And Rampolla was considered an enemy by the two capitals. Possibly, the remembrance of the veto with which Austria had snapped the tiara from the forceful Sicilian, at the Conclave of 1903, influenced them more than actual facts.

In reality, the Central Empires, during the war, short of friends as they were, shammed, more than they actually felt, satisfaction with Benedict XV.

It may be that the authoritarian Pius X might have gone on thinking that a victory of Austria and Germany was the best for which the Church could wish. Not only was Austria the greatest Catholic power; but autocratic Germany and the Turk himself would, to Pius X, have seemed preferable to unbelieving France which had made him suffer so.

But Benedict XV had entirely repudiated the anti-demo-

[1] A recommendation, not an order, to the Italian Catholic voters not to take part in the elections, which Pius IX had given out in 1867.

cratic policy of his predecessor; his judgment was then freer. In the tragedy which was covering the world with bloodshed, all he weighed in cold blood were the immediate interests of the Church. And the more he studied both camps, the more perplexed he became. On one hand, Protestant England, synonymous in the world with that Liberalism of which the Church of Rome will always be more suspicious than of any experiment in democracy, and on the side of England, Russia who, even before the war, was already giving the Vatican so much trouble in the Balkans. On the other hand, the Pope felt the danger inherent in the success of the Central Powers which would have spelled a Pan-Germanist victory destructive of Catholic prestige in Asia Minor and perhaps even in Austria. The Pope's thoughts quickly crystallized in the following hope: peace without victory on either side, with—he added—a restoration of Catholic Poland, the liberation of Belgium, the elimination of all Russian influence in the Balkans, a few Austrian territorial concessions to Italy. Adroitly formulated, each one of these clauses might have seemed a concession to the war-aims of the Entente. In actual fact—taken one by one—they represented nothing but definite interests of the Church of Rome, including the last one, for Benedict wisely counted exclusively on the good will of the Italian people to enable him to go on living in peace at the Vatican. He always opposed the plans of Temporal Restoration which became so dear to his successor, Pius XI. His program and his hopes had one drawback: as the chances of victory dwindled for the Central Empires, the white peace he had wished for in his mind from the beginning became more and more the solution desired by Vienna and by Berlin, the kind of peace against which the States of the Entente struggled with all their might.

The most important step of his peace-action was taken

on August 1, 1917, when he sent out his note "To the Chiefs of the Belligerent Peoples."

The principles he enunciated, after he had first declared that he had no private aims and that he was not basing his statements on the suggestions or interests of any particular belligerent party, were:

Substitution of the moral force of law for material force;

Reduction of armaments, to the extent compatible with the maintenance of public order within the State;

Substitution of arbitration for armed force;

Guarantee of the freedom of the seas;

Reciprocal surrender of all indemnities for war damages except in the cases where a different understanding is made;

Reciprocal restitution of the then occupied territories, that is, complete evacuation of Belgium by Germany, with guarantees of her full political independence from both belligerent parties, evacuation of French territories, and, on the other hand, restitution of the German colonies;

Settlement of the territorial questions, for instance those pending between Austria and Italy, between Germany and France, in a spirit of peace and with due regard to the feelings of the peoples;

Settlement, in the same spirit, of the Armenian and Balkan questions, and of the question of the Polish Kingdom.

It was then declared, in the circles of the Entente, that the Pope had made agreements with the new German Chancellor, Michaelis, through Pacelli, the Nuncio in Munich about the "principles" of his note. The Pope might have answered that he had not made agreements, but mere soundings, a statement which would have been strengthened by the answer which he later received from Berlin and which displeased him almost as much as the silence of the Entente.

The most important document provoked by the Pope's note was the answer made to it by President Wilson on August twenty-seventh. The papal program—so the American note declared—meant, purely and simply, the return to the pre-war state of affairs, which could not be considered by the President as a just and lasting peace.

The failure was complete—at which only Austria was surprised, for she had placed some hope in the papal initiative. But no one, probably, was less surprised than Benedict.

He had long withstood the pressure of those who advised him to use, on behalf of peace, "the high moral authority of the Holy See."

With his cold sarcasm, he would answer:

"Authority? Strange that those should speak of it who have always denied us all authority. . . ."

But when the Emperor Charles sent him, in July, 1917, a filial "letter of obeisance" in which he left it to his "august authority" to decide on the sacrifices to be accomplished by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in order to reach a rapid peace settlement, Benedict realized that he was bound to do something. The soundings made in Berlin materialized in his note. The author of it was the General of the Jesuits, Ledokowski. The detail which, I was told by the Pope's most intimate friend, would tend to authenticate what was whispered at the time in the very circles of the Vatican: namely, that the Pope hoped that the "settlement of the territorial questions pending between Austria and Italy . . . made with due regard to the feelings of the peoples" would be compensated to Austria by the adjunction of the Polish Crown to hers. Ledokowski, exclusively imbued, as he wanted himself to be, with the laws and ideals of his Society, had yet kept in his heart an ardent Polish patriotism, in which the man and the Jesuit met.

The influence Benedict had on the drawing up of the note and on everything that had to do with the initiative, was solely a moderating influence of modesty; he did not want to exhibit himself either as peace-maker or as arbiter. Of the whole of the note of August first, the wording that is most probably entirely the Pope's own is that of the final sentence addressed to the Heads of the belligerent States: "Meanwhile, uniting ourselves fervently in prayer to all the souls of the faithful who desire peace, we beg the Holy Ghost to give you enlightenment and understanding."

The explanation of the actions and character of Benedict XV lies wholly, in my opinion, in the coexistence within him of two trends of thought that are, after all, contradictory in appearance only.

As pope, he thought, he was bound to think, that all possibilities lie open before the Church, even that of universal domination which, in the misery of our skeptical times, it is dangerous to avow, but which had been loudly proclaimed by the Gregorys and the Innocents. Never, then, must there be one word spoken that might be interpreted against the ultimate aims of the Church. Thus it is that when Europe, exhausted, adhered to Wilson's idea and, the League of Nations once created, began to look toward Geneva as to the institution that would eliminate the danger of new disasters, the Pope, however much devoted to peace, did not hide his mistrust of a League which claimed supremacy but of which no pope could ever be a member, for a pope can not sit as an equal among equals. That is why in his encyclical, *Pacem Dei,* of May 23, 1920, he simply ignored the League by advocating—and therefore treating as not yet existing—"the formation of a Society of Nations based on Christian Law."

But the heir of the medieval traditions of the Church was, at the same time, a modern, perspicacious man who

had no illusions as to the actual value of the moral elements at his disposal. He felt, and made no secret of it to his intimates, that Catholic influence, in the complex game of the war, was limited, and that it might have aroused more suspicion and more hostility than either attention or respect. That the interests at stake transcended the influence of any moral prestige, Wilson himself—who yet, at one time, enjoyed unparalleled moral force—found out by bitter experience.

This cold and clear conception of the modest limitations of his action explains why Benedict never indulged in any of the steps a demagogue would have been tempted to take in his place—steps which would have won him noisy fame at the time—but which would probably have left the Church torn by dissensions and hatreds.

Benedict, on his death-bed, could say to himself that he passed on the unity of the Church untouched to his successor—despite the violence and the length of the storm. He succeeded in this, which was after all his supreme task, because he accomplished his duty humbly. In this humility lie his greatness and his wisdom.

Did the wisdom come from a perfect control of the man over himself and over the forces entrusted to his care—which constitutes the real greatness of a statesman—or from a lack of enthusiasm, from a sense of irony that sometimes seemed his most striking characteristics?

When one doubts, it is better to put down the question-marks than pretend one can answer the questions.

## XIII

### Pachich, The Essence of Serbia

ENEMIES of Nicholas Pachich—Bulgarians, Croats, philo-Croats, Serbians who wanted his place—have often insinuated that he was of Turkish origin, and thus accounted for the despotic temperament which enabled him to rule his Serbia with an iron rod for over twenty years.

If this were true, it would be but a rather common occurrence. Foreign blood and foreign mentality have frequently helped rather than hindered an ambitious man to dominate a country: Mazarin and Bonaparte in France, Disraeli and—why not?—Lloyd George in England. The list is long.

If the case of Pachich is worth recalling, it is because, in my opinion, the key to his long successes is to be found elsewhere. In a political world of middle- and lower-middle-class men in Western Europe and in the Balkans, he was the only real peasant; and he had of the peasant the imperturbable steadfastness, the realistic mind, the passion for the soil, the wary silence. This latter quality was probably one of his predominating assets over the Serbian politicians who are, with a few exceptions, among the most talkative in the Balkans. For men still relatively young like me, he was a living link with the past, this Serbian Prime Minister who had been born an Ottoman subject, who spoke Serbian badly and Bulgarian badly, for the difference between the two languages had increased in his lifetime, who had known Bakunin. . . . A Russian dreamer certainly had little hold on a son of Serbian peasants who wanted to base the

strength of the Serbian national organization on a system of rural democracy preserving the happy social conditions of Serbia,—a country of small landowners. But contrary to a legend which, I am afraid, nobody will ever be able to shake any more, Pachich—for all his embassies and visits to St. Petersburg—was far less under the sway of Russian influence and admiration than has been said, and will still be said. That is why a study of the real Pachich on the part of one who saw him every day during long years of war may not be entirely useless, not to speak of the possibility of throwing some more light on the question of eventual Serbian responsibilities in connection with the origins of the World War.

Any serene contribution to the question of "war-guilt" seems to me deeply desirable, not only for the historical conscience of the world at large, but especially in the interest of a sound understanding between France and Germany, which is so necessary to the safety of Europe. The governments of France and Germany already are much nearer to an Entente than superficial onlookers may believe; but behind the governments are the peoples, and the peoples are slow to forget legends.

The result, both moral and political, of the dogmatic affirmation contained in Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty as to the responsibilities of the war, might give food for reflection to all those who believe in methods of violence.

There was in Germany at the end of the war an intellectually important nucleus of people who wanted to show the Germans how the foolishness of the Hohenzollern régime had brought such a terrible visitation on a people who had believed too naïvely in autocrats and dictators. The four ponderous volumes of the *White Book,* published in 1919, remain as a proof of this state of mind.

The fact that no official documentation on the July,

1914, crisis has been issued in France since the end of the war has produced results in Germany quite opposed to those that had been hoped for in France. It was believed at the Quai d'Orsay that it would be polite to keep to the war propaganda of the 1914 *Livre Jaune* type: all goodness on the one side, all crime on the other. It was asking a little too much. The unexpected result has been that the four volumes of the *White Book* have virtually disappeared from circulation, and the feeling is increasing in Germany, even among democrats, that, after all, there must have been some excuse for the rulers of Hohenzollern Germany, if in France they keep such a close silence.

The feeling which all the nations shared in common from 1908—date of the Austrian annexation of Bosnia—to 1914, and which ended in the outbreak of the war, had the same characteristics everywhere—in Paris as in Berlin, in Vienna as in St. Petersburg. Everybody stood in fear of war, and everybody, therefore, helped to bring it about.

But once this general common responsibility is acknowledged, why should we forget that immediate direct responsibilities of the conflagration fall on the Austro-Hungarian aristocratic rulers, and on the German chiefs who gave the Austrians the assurance that they were behind them?

To contribute calmly, with no prejudice, to the history and demonstration of this responsibility is, for us, a duty, when the aim in view is not a continuation of war hatreds, but a desire to show that only the practise of freedom, only the full exercise of popular sovereignty—for all its faults and shortcomings—can avoid the repetition of the disasters which endangered European civilization. It is all the more a duty when one sees a new trend of opinion develop itself in serious zones of thought—in Europe as well as in America—concerning the synthetic judgment to be passed on Serbia in correlation with the origins of the war.

There are two reasons for this: the one, normal and natural. Just as, during the war, the pendulum had swung entirely in one direction—Serbia was admittedly quoted exclusively as "heroic Serbia"—it has now swung to the other extreme, as a tardy penalty for an excess of clumsy official Entente propaganda. But the other reason is essentially and typically Serbian: not only an absolute failure on the part of the Belgrade Government to publish any documents, diplomatic or otherwise, since the end of the war, but the maintenance of an indifferent silence toward charges like those that have been raised against Serbia about the Sarajevo murder, a silence maintained even when statements of individual Serbians of some standing could be quoted to substantiate these charges. Nothing strange that this Serbian silence has been interpreted everywhere in a sense unfavorable to the Serbia of 1914. If they do not defend themselves, it is because they know they have nothing better to do than to keep quiet; such the conclusion frequently reached of late. Now, on this point, only those who know the Serbian people and, knowing it, appreciate it as it deserves to be appreciated, with no silly airs of Western "superiority," and yet at the same time who recognize the shortcomings of its officialdom—only those can understand the incredible indifference the "leading classes" have in Serbia to foreign opinion, and their blind ignorance of the consequences which moral judgments passed on the country from abroad might entail. The phenomenon becomes less strange than might seem when one considers certain facts. The Serbian people, with no aristocracy, no traditions, and—but for a few honorable exceptions—with no centers of moral and intellectual culture, is made up of three classes: the peasants, who are the immense majority and constitute one of the healthiest, most honest and most deserving collectivities I know of; the politicians, the State

officials and the future politicians and future State officials, often returned from some hasty university studies abroad, who, but for a noble few, appreciate nothing, understand nothing, beyond party-strife; the officers who, with admirable elements in their midst, are, as a body, poisoned by traditions and habits certainly not very susceptible of engendering scruples of a historic nature. Although they know nothing of Frederick II, they are always ready to say as he did: "Let me win, and then a lawyer will come and declare I was right." Officially, above the three castes, is a King personally filled with the best intentions, but hampered by a complex and troubled situation that would make it very difficult for him to set himself up as inquisitor or judge. (I am convinced his father, King Peter Karageorgevich, was absolutely ignorant of the plot that ended in the massacre of his predecessor, King Alexander Obrenovich, and of Queen Draga; but a dynasty does not easily overcome such origins, as the Belgrade *coup d'ètat* of 1929 has made manifest to all.)

An early proof of this peasant-like ignorance of the potency and importance of the moral *"impondérables,"* as Bismarck used to define them, was given by Pachich himself from the very first days of the 1914 crisis. Franz Ferdinand had been murdered; he had been murdered by a Bosnian of Serbian origin. Nobody in Serbia could affirm with certainty, at the time, that no Serbian had had a hand in the plot. From Vienna, the Serbian Envoy, Jovan Jovanovitch, had already warned Belgrade that Count Berchtold and those of whom he was the instrument were going to pretend that some direct, or indirect, responsibility fell on the Serbian Government.

Pachich was, then, more desirous than he had ever been of peace for Serbia. The country was exhausted by the efforts it had made during the two Balkan Wars; the

recent action in Albania had proved to him that even the tireless Serbian peasants were beginning to weary of calls to arms. Negotiations were under way with the leading men of Montenegro in order to induce King Nicholas, solely concerned with his crown, to assent to a customs union between the two Serbian countries, preliminary to a future more complete union.

Feeling that the threats from Vienna were thickening, it would have been natural for one in Pachich's place to start spontaneously a few of those police and judicial investigations which, a few weeks later, the Austrian ultimatum was to require from him so brutally.

But Pachich did not even think of this. If he said to himself that should Berchtold and Conrad really want to push their plan through, no Serbian *dèmarches* would stop them—and if he thought that, he was right—he never realized, on the other hand, he never suspected, that stern and voluntary official inquiries about an eventual complicity of Serbians in the Sarajevo crime would have constituted a tremendous moral weapon in the hands of all the friends of peace, in Rome as in St. Petersburg, in Paris as in London, and perhaps even in Berlin.

The inertness of the Serbian Government at that time, which biased historians can nowadays interpret as an element of proof against Serbia, is nothing but a first manifestation of that moral apathy of which, after the war, she gave other tokens even more paradoxical.

Pachich was, his whole life long, a man ruled by one idea, by one passion: hence a sort of greatness that can not be denied him. His passion was the making first, and then the maintenance in power, of that Serbian Radical Party which suited so perfectly the country's social and economic form, a country wholly made up of small estates belonging to peasants or to sons of peasants, having each at least a

field, a few dozen pigs and an orchard of plum-trees. It may run counter to the customary phrases of foreign-policy specialists anent Slav solidarity, but it is not rash to assert that the primal reason why this little world of peasants, so attached to the soil, looked toward Russia was the stupidity of the Austrian ministers. The barriers raised periodically from Vienna against Serbian agricultural exports made the Serbians feel always uncertain of the sale of their plums and pigs.

Pachich and the Radical Party he founded against King Milan Obrenovich in 1880 answered the economic anxieties of the Serbs. Hence their success. And in reality the touch of nationalistic aggressiveness which Pachich gave the impression of adding to his policy was nothing more, to my mind, than what proved to be the poetic side of his soul—every man of action has a poetic side, even a peasant like Pachich—that is to say: a superhuman faith in the strength, in the toughness, in the vitality of his Serbian people.

To this burning faith it was that he owed his power and his success against King Milan, who was yet so much more intelligent and more cultured than he. Milan Obrenovich had weighed against each other Austrian force and Serbian littleness, and knew that in diplomacy there was no place left for Davids and Goliaths. Pachich it was, however, when the tragedy came, who, with his blind belief in Serbian vitality, was right.

If Pachich hated the Bulgarians in the way that neighbors can, and schemed wars and diplomatic intrigues against them, he relied only, as far as Austria was concerned, on remote certainties; his sons, perhaps, would see the great day, so he thought. Never did he provoke the danger, even if sometimes he did not ward it off.

Several times, in the days of Aehrenthal, and for the last time, in vain, in the days of Count Berchtold, he tried

spontaneously, and apart from any Russian advice, to better the relations of his country with the neighboring Monarchy. Undoubtedly at the bottom of his heart he always considered that, in case of a downfall of Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbian as they were, must come back to Serbia. But this did not prevent him from desiring cordial relations; with Aehrenthal he hoped for a moment that his voice would be heard. In November, 1912, he tried again and expressed a wish to come to Vienna to conclude a political and economic agreement, of which the thorniest but not insoluble point was the request for an outlet on the Adriatic, an economic formula that in no way implied a territorial settlement. Even nowadays it would seem that the coming to Vienna of the Serbian leader who had been most surrounded by Russian legends might have constituted a *succès de prestige* for Berchtold. In any case, the attempt would have been one that honors a statesman even when it fails. Such was the opinion of patriotic and far-seeing Austrians like Professor Redlich, now of Harvard University and at the time member of the Austrian Parliament, and of Doctor Baernreither, an influential member of the Austrian Upper House, who tried to smooth the way for the event. With *Hochgeborene* contempt, however, Berchtold rejected the overtures of the two Austrians and refused to receive Pachich.

Notwithstanding this rebuff, Pachich tried again twelve months later. He had known that the Austro-Hungarian Government had, during the summer of 1913, tried to find a pretext for war against Serbia and that the *coup* had failed, owing solely, or chiefly, to the formal opposition of the Italian Premier, Giolitti. In the early days of October, 1913, Pachich once more offered to go to Vienna in order to build up the relations between the two countries on a basis "solid for decades." This time the refusal did not

emanate exclusively from Berchtold. The matter was discussed at a Cabinet meeting and referred to the Emperor. The result was another refusal to listen to the Serbian Minister; a manifest proof that high-handed methods were more than ever being considered.

When one thinks that Pachich had patiently stood all this, one finds it even more astounding that, after the Sarajevo murder, whereas the storm was already rumbling in the distance in Vienna, he could go to southern Serbia, apparently unconcerned, to prepare the impending elections. Wholly absorbed in the electoral campaign, he thought of nothing else but of winning to the Radical Party the votes of the new electorate which the Balkan victories had secured for Serbia in Macedonia. When the Austrian Envoy, Baron Giesl, delivered the ultimatum to the acting Prime Minister in Belgrade, he, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister as well, was in a village in the distant Sanjak of Novibazar. When the news reached him there, he thought first of continuing his journey south, and of going to Salonika where he had arranged an interview with the Greek Premier, Venizelos; not that he failed to understand, at that ultimate moment, the gravity of the situation, as it has been said, but because it had become a sort of second nature with him—and his strongest asset in a petty world of over-excited politicians—to show a kind of impassiveness superior to men and events. "The Powers," he said to himself, "must get us out of this *mauvais pas:* the less we do, the better."

He was not so far wrong, now that the decisive moment had come; not even wrong when he did not think of having the Voivode Putnik, the Chief of the Serbian Army, recalled from the Austrian spa where he was taking a cure and where he was surprised by the declaration of war. Wrong he had been immediately after the Sarajevo murder,

when he kept up his impassive attitude, instead of making, or at least staging, some proposal of inquest, of research, of collaboration with the Austrian police, to help it to find eventual accomplices. . . . But, as I have already said, those are moral shades that the Serbs are not sensitive to. They now bear the penalty for this, with a flood of recent books and essays on the Serbian responsibilities; and, blind still, they do not realize in the least how much harm it is doing them.

The days of the murder often came up in my long talks with old Pachich during the war, when I spent months with him in Corfu, where the Serbian Government had found a refuge under Italian and French protection. The Serbian Prime Minister, in spite of his age, used to drive with me to some beautiful solitary beach, where we would bathe and swim and rest in the sun. Diplomatic lies were difficult in such Homeric surroundings.

Although he did not avoid thorny arguments with me, his replies still kept the sententious brevity which made him a leader among a people who, in politics, are incurably garrulous. In talking of the Archduke's death he did not deny that the Black Hand (the famous Serbian secret society) may have been a party to the conspiracy. But he always added that the government had no knowledge of it. The Black Hand was plotting mainly, in 1914, against the civil power in Serbia. How could he, Pachich, have known about their plans?

But I remembered having heard from Austrian relatives that the Serbian Envoy in Vienna, Jovan Jovanovich, had warned the Austrian Government against the Archduke's visit to Sarajevo. What, I asked, did that mean?

And the old man, after a silence, said, in his curt, Oriental way: "Is it not common knowledge that it is warm in summer?"

He meant that a Habsburg visit to Bosnia would of necessity have provoked dangerous manifestations of the rising Bosnian feelings.

The most serious argument that has been put forth since the war in favor of the theory of responsibility, at least indirect, of the Serbian Government in the Sarajevo murder, has come from Belgrade itself. In 1924, Ljuba Jovanovich, then President of the *Skupstina,* and ten years earlier a minister in the Pachich Cabinet of the time, wrote and published, under the emotional title of *Slav Blood,* an article in which he declared with a moral callousness typically Serbian (I mean typical of the Serbian politician) that, like his chief, he had heard that "some young men" were planning to go to Sarajevo to murder Franz Ferdinand; that the Minister of the Interior, Protich, had given orders to the "frontier authorities" to arrest them on their way through; but that these, being in the plot, had let the youths go by, alleging to the Minister that his orders had come too late. Such is the testimony of Ljuba Jovanovich which has called forth endless glosses and disquisitions in Germany and Austria as in the United States.

For my part—were I not convinced by other more direct evidence of the falseness of this story—I should almost be tempted to add one to those so-called proofs of its authenticity heaped up by the German and American historians and polemists who, abysmally ignorant of certain puerilities to be found in Belgrade only, have turned this article to account: namely, that it is too stupid, and that its intentions are too contradictory, to be fictitious. One would have invented something better, one feels like saying. For indeed, Ljuba Jovanovich was, by his version, casting a stain on the honor of his country, whose government had then done so little in order to avoid the crime; and, at the same time, and at a moment when a cult of the Sarajevo murderers was

arising in Serbia and in Bosnia, he was acquiring no active merit for the crime. His article even ended with the expression of sentimental horror he gave vent to when he received the news by telephone "of what," he still adds, "I knew was being prepared there."

Although I am convinced that this point of history will never be elucidated by the documentary evidence that Mr. Seton-Watson appeals to in vain in his standard book, *Sarajevo,* I believe it would not be useless to relate what I learned, and the inferences I was able to make, from the long conversations I had with Pachich and with Jovanovich himself.

Ljuba Jovanovich was a fat, sentimental and vain Serbian from Cattaro, who had passed over into Serbia in the 'eighties to escape from the petty persecutions of the Austrian police. Like all the cultured Slavs of Cattaro—and, by the way, of Ragusa—he spoke Italian perfectly and had a deep love for the classics of Italian literature. He even slightly despised the Italian spoken by Slavs and Italians of Dalmatia because it was full of the sounds of the soft Venetian dialect. His Italian culture was a link between him and me, and he was one of our most frequent guests at the Villa Condi, in Manduchio, near the town of Corfu, where I had taken up my residence. Gladstone had lived in the same house in the 'fifties when he came to Corfu for the cession of the Ionian Islands to the Hellenic Kingdom; and Jovanovich and I often took from the library the copies of Dante and Machiavelli which must have been in the hands of the Grand Old Man. Jovanovich and I talked of everything endlessly; or rather, he talked and I listened. He had a boundless admiration for Mazzini whom he considered on the same footing with founders of religions; and I remember that he was greatly astonished when I quoted pages to him where Mazzini, in his polemics with Daniele

Manin, excused political murder in certain cases of extreme political oppression.

"I understand, I understand," objected the excellent Jovanovich, "but if this were applied to Serbia it would excuse the *comitadjs* of Macedonia; and you see how much they have harmed us."

I often spoke with him too about the Sarajevo murder. I had learned before the Serbian Ministers did that the ferocious investigations of the Austrians in Bosnia had not succeeded in discovering either Serbian accomplices or a Serbian responsibility; I told him so—and he was extremely glad at the news. "When we shall have won the war," he said, "all those cross-examinations will have to be published."

I am still absolutely convinced, notwithstanding his article of 1924, of the sincerity of his words at Corfu, and of the total ignorance in which he stood of anything whatsoever that concerned the crime.

To my mind, his talk of 1924 is to be accounted for by a travesty, partially sincere perhaps, of his recollections of 1914, and by an old man's vanity.

It is not certain that old men are always a useful element in public life. The man who sees his lifetime dwindle thinks he will find an illusion of life in the honors and the applause that still greet him. And if his soul has a touch of vulgarity, he provokes them by stooping down to the popular nonsense of the day. Such was Jovanovich's case: he was a literary man, the species of the political genus that is most sensitive to vanity and applause. As every one else in Serbia, and even in Austria, like Franz Ferdinand himself who, on the eve of his departure for Sarajevo had a sort of presentiment of his death[1]—Ljuba Jovanovich probably said to himself at the café, during a walk, possibly during

[1]See chapter on Franz Ferdinand.

Cabinet meetings: "They'll end by killing him." . . . He probably may even have exclaimed at the telephone what he melodramatized in his article: "Oh, I knew it."

But the truth is, he knew nothing.

Pachich, who had a certain grandeur, even when at eighty his hold on power, of which he was so fond, began to weaken, never indulged in those cheap boasts that might have won him a new lease of popularity when, in the heat of exasperated nationalisms, some thought of glorifying the murderers of Sarajevo. But, blind as he was to the *impondérables* of moral causes, the effects of which are only felt at a distance, he did nothing to clear Serbia from the suspicions which had been cast on her. Such as I have known him, and I make bold to say few Westerners knew him as I did, I can imagine Pachich, in the summer of 1924, reading Ljuba Jovanovich's article and merely saying to himself, since Jovanovich had, at the time, put himself against his old friend and was deluding himself with the hope of succeeding him: "Here is a silly concoction that will prevent dear Ljuba from becoming prime minister."

In that long and thorny question of the boundaries between Italy and Yugo-Slavia, I found Pachich always loyal, always moderate, always ready to come to an understanding. In as much as he could harbor general ideas, that of an active friendship with Italy was one of them.

When the United States entered the war, I pointed out to Baron Sonnino in Rome and to Pachich in Corfu, where we were together, how much it would be to the advantage of both our countries to go united, and not as contending parties, to a Peace Conference in which the United States would be the supreme arbiter. If I had impressed upon Sonnino that his Treaty of London was not binding on Wilson, I easily persuaded Pachich that an Italian diplomacy at loggerheads with its eastern neighbors would

still be strong enough to paralyze all the efforts and aims of the Serbs at the Conference. Pachich understood and agreed with me on a compromise acknowledging in general forms the same frontiers to Italy that I secured for my country in 1920, with the Rapallo Treaty. I brought Pachich to Rome but, alas, Sonnino had once more gone back to his hesitations.[1]

Pachich always liked to proclaim openly my friendship and my fairness for the Serbian nation, whose valiant and healthy peasants I had learned to appreciate in the camps of Corfu and in the trenches of Macedonia. When I negotiated the Treaty of Rapallo, toward the end of 1920, with Vesnich, then prime minister, the old Pachich, who patronized the Vesnich Cabinet and had witnessed our negotiations with satisfaction, sent him a short word to Rapallo: "Do not haggle with Sforza; he is asking you what he always told me he would ask; he is our friend; but if you start haggling, he will break off the negotiations and decide by himself." Vesnich showed me these few lines from Pachich after the signature of the Treaty.

What Pachich never understood about me was why I always dropped the numerous overtures he made to me, during the war, concerning a partition of Albania between Italy and Serbia. He could not understand why I was so indifferent to a scheme that would certainly have been agreeable to Baron Sonnino, then minister for foreign affairs.

So many things had happened, even between us two. Yet, when in 1922 he came to see me at the Embassy in Paris, some vague difficulty having cropped up at the time about Albania, he could not help saying in his broken French: "You see, Monsieur Sforza [he never gave titles]; why did you always reject my ideas about Albania?"

Then, as of old in Corfu, I did not try to explain. The

[1]See chapter on Sonnino.

rights of peoples to independence, the interest Italy had in not betraying the cause of nationalities,—all this was a sealed book to him. And that is why he always looked with suspicion upon the evolution of what he would have had a "Greater Serbia," into the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

If one had opened his heart, one would have found these three words inscribed in it: Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania.

With hatred, Bulgaria; with greediness, Albania; but Serbia, his little peasant Serbia, with boundless love and pride.

Thus do peasants look upon the fields they have inherited or bought after great longing. They are, to them, the most fertile and the most enviable in the world.

## XIV

### Venizelos, Land-Hunger

VENIZELOS has been, still is, at once the most beloved and the most hated man in contemporary Greece. But it will be difficult for the sons of those who hate him still, not to acknowledge one day—although in the Orient, hatreds usually become family traditions—that Venizelos was, until the World War, an exceptionally fine servant of the Hellenic nation.

He served Greece well, when as a small lawyer in Crete, still in the hands of the Turks then, he succeeded in embodying all the hopes of the Christian Cretans and eventually in achieving the only possible solution: the annexation of Crete to the Hellenic Kingdom.

He again served his country well when he took the reins of government in 1910, after the apparent success of the military régime and its rapid failure. The Military League had indeed represented all the hopes of the people disappointed by the bad administration of politicians; with the spirit which characterizes all those who believe in the wonders of a rule of generals, the League had tried with the most naïve confidence—it is so easy for officers to hold that everything goes wrong because the frocks are not "efficient"—but it had failed miserably before the gravity of obstacles and problems of which those excellent colonels had not so much as imagined the extent.

Impossible, as matters stood, to go back to the discredited politicians of old; there was no one left but Venizelos. I heard from King George of Greece himself,

at Aix-les-Bains, that Venizelos told him, at his first audience: "If Your Majesty accepts my program and allows me to choose my own means, I will give you in five years a Greece strengthened and new, capable of enjoining respect abroad."

Witty and good-natured as he was, and with his common sense and his love of life, King George recalled King Edward, with this difference—and I do not know to whose advantage I should ascribe it—that the Englishman was very fond of his royal authority, and even of the outward appearance of his royal authority, whereas the Dano-Hellenic put no bounds to his disenchanted skepticism. It was thus easy for the King of the Hellenes to accept the ill-concealed dictatorship of the Cretan who repaid him by giving back to the royal princes, whom the Military League had ousted, their rank in the army and their privileges. Venizelos was able to show King George, only three years after he had made his promise, a Greece that was, or seemed, completely renovated. But, after all, in politics, especially in foreign politics, even "seeming" is part of reality.

It is difficult also to deny that Venizelos again served Greece in the Balkan Wars. It is perhaps not accurate that he was the author of the alliance of all the Balkan peoples against Turkey, as most French writers dogmatically assert. King Nicholas of Montenegro boasted of having had the idea first; others have said that the real promoter of the alliance was Bourchier, the famous *Times* correspondent in the Balkans. The truth is that the idea of the Balkanic alliance was in the air, was inevitable from the moment when Italy had, in 1911, declared war on Turkey for the possession of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.

When the Greeks, after a triumphant series of allied victories over the Turks, occupied Salonika, the old Sultan

Abdul-Hamid, whom the Young Turks had sent there in captivity and who lived with his suite in the villa of an Italian Jew, exclaimed: "They have let the Balkan people unite; they are lost!" And by "they" he meant his successors at Constantinople who had repudiated his old motto: "Divide, in order to reign."

Venizelos was less well inspired in the peace which followed the short war the Greeks, Serbians and Rumanians waged against the Bulgarians about the shares of the common spoils. Undoubtedly, the Bulgarians had been guilty of having listened to advice from Vienna, where they were scared by the Serbian triumphs; but Bulgaria is a great living reality of the Balkans, and it would have been wise to grant her honorable terms even after the defeat. It seems, truth to tell, that Venizelos at one time inclined to leave them Cavalla, a port necessary to Bulgaria and useless to Greece; but he soon gave in to the unbridled passions of his populace, for whom King Constantine was the noisy spokesman.

But those are minor mistakes easily explained by the prevailing atmosphere of the time.

The terrible and sanguinary illusions began for Venizelos with the World War.

His defenders have sometimes maintained that his decision to throw Greece—the majority of whose people were for neutrality—into the maelstrom of the World War had one supreme moral reason: loyalty to the Treaty of Alliance with Serbia, now attacked. From Pachich's own lips—that is from him who might have had the most to say against Greece—I learned the details of his exchanges of ideas with Venizelos on this subject. The latter had left Athens by sea bound for Belgium, whither he intended to go through Austria and Germany, when, on landing at Trieste, he found the Greek Minister to Vienna who had come to

meet him and to tell him of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia. In spite of this, Venizelos wanted to go on with his journey; and he did not turn back before he had reached Munich where he learned that Germany was mobilizing. Austrian mobilization might mean an Austro-Serbian war; but German mobilization, he must have said to himself, meant a European war. And that alone decided him to return to Athens at once, via Italy. Pachich put some questions to him concerning the attitude of Greece. Venizelos answered as follows: "If Bulgaria attacks Serbia, Greece will immediately grant Serbia armed assistance." If it were Austria, and not Bulgaria, who attacked Serbia, he would go into the matter on his return to Athens.

Undoubtedly, as soon as the conflict became general, Venizelos did not hesitate for a moment. On the contrary, his one fear was that he should come into the war too late. He even declared to his ministers, during a Cabinet meeting: "We must make up our minds to intervene at once, for in three weeks the Allies will be in Berlin."

How can one explain this blindness, at the very time when, in Italy, men like Bissolati, eager to make their country enter the war on the side of democracies and for the sake of democracies, were loyally warning public opinion that the war would be long, and that the destruction of "Austro-German militarism" would be a tremendous task?

The truth was that men of Bissolati's type might be either wrong or right, but they were at any rate thinking a European thought. While Venizelos, for all his admirable intellectual gifts, on that occasion spoke a merely Oriental thought. He was still at the conception of England as she was in the 'fifties, when thundering Palmerston made the whole world tremble because a vague sort of Levantine Jew, Pacifico, who happened to be a British subject, had been arrested. When the dark hours came for the Allies,

Venizelos stuck serenely to his faith: "England," he used to say, "loses all the battles except one: the last!"

As against him, during the first fifteen months of the World War, the King, Constantine, married to the Kaiser's sister, an honorary Field-Marshal of the German Army since the war with the Turks—and proud of the title—was firmly convinced that Germany would win. He had for German efficiency the same religious respect that Venizelos had for British invincibility.

Result: a country irremediably divided, and consequently incapable of giving its full measure in a war. I lived among the Greeks during part of the war, and I consider the following estimate as accurate: four-fifths of the Continental Greeks were for neutrality and, in their hearts, convinced that Germany would win; Crete, and all the Greek islands—except Corfu where everybody was "German"—stood for intervention on the side of the Allies.

When the English and French, followed shortly afterward by the Italians and Serbs, landed at Salonika, Venizelos protested as a matter of form, but, at the same time, secretly warned the French and British ministers that his protest was a step of no importance taken in order to avoid a breach with the King. But a few days later, at the beginning of October, 1915, during a speech he made in Parliament, advocating intervention on the side of the Entente, a deputy interrupted him:

"And if German armies also come to Macedonia?"

And Venizelos answered unhesitatingly:

"All the enemies of our friends will be our enemies."

He had never committed himself so far. On the next day, he was summoned to the Palace, where the King declared to him that the Anglo-French landing was equivalent to the violation of Belgium, and exacted the resignation of his Prime Minister.

*Photo from Ewing Galloway, New York*

Venizelos

Venizelos remained another year struggling in the capital. He ended by drawing threatening hatreds on his head. Finally, he decided to act. On September 26, 1916, came the flight from Athens, where a man, cleverly made up as his double, still showed himself at the window for a few days to deceive the police. Shortly afterward, he founded at Salonika the National Defense Government. Henceforth, officially, there were two Greeces, divided from each other by a hatred the results of which still make themselves felt. In June, 1917, came a formal reunification; but it followed on a deed that still increased the secret grudges.

Under a juridical pretext of a "protection" of Greece, that went back to the foundation of the Kingdom, the British and French Governments—but the idea came from Salonika—sent Monsieur Jonnart to Athens as high commissioner for the Powers *protectrices et garantes* of Greece. Jonnart summoned the King to abdicate for having violated the Constitution. On June eleventh, Constantine abdicated in favor of his second son; on the twelfth he left for Italy. On the twenty-seventh, Venizelos left Salonika and entered Athens with a regiment of Cretans wearing French trench helmets. When victory came, Venizelos could boast of Hellenic contingents on the Macedonian front, fighting beside the French, the English, the Italians, the Serbians. Their military value had been nil, which is not disparaging to the Greek nation. Only a united people can fight; a people as bitterly divided as the Greeks had become, could not. After the Armistice, at Constantinople, the French Commander-in-Chief Franchet d'Esperey did not hesitate to tell me that the praises he had bestowed on the Hellenic contingents were nothing but "political necessities and tonics."

If, after the fecund and memorable years of home-reconstruction and of the Balkan Wars, Venizelos had been

guilty of political and moral errors, during the Peace Conference, where he could sit among the victors, it was worse. For not only did he commit all the errors that are the penalty of the politicians who must, in order to maintain themselves in power, give "glory" to their country; but he also had to commit all those which were nothing but the ransom for his having kept himself in power during the war with the help of foreign bayonets. And by that again did he augment the number of the discontented in Greece.

At the time of the foolish armed Western (or Western-paid) expeditions against the Bolsheviks—Giolitti and I were the first to stand up in public against the futility of such undertakings—Clemenceau, meeting Venizelos at one of the sittings of the Peace Conference, said:

"You *are* our Allies, are you not?"

And Venizelos replied suavely:

"Can you doubt it, *Monsieur le Président?*"

"Well, then, do send a division immediately to Odessa, for our expedition into southern Russia."

Venizelos saw at once what a blunder this would be from a Greek point of view. But he was no longer a free man after Salonika. And a division was sent to wretched failure in Ukrainia, which increased Greek rancors against him.

Diplomatically, he seemed to meet with nothing but success. By the Treaty of Neuilly concluded with Bulgaria, and by the ephemeral Treaty of Sèvres with the Turks, he could boast of having gained eastern Thrace with Dedeagatch, one of the coasts of the Sea of Marmora, and of the Dardanelles, the islands of Imbros, Tenedos and Samothrace, the great part of southern Albania, and, in Asia Minor, Smyrna and a considerable zone around it. By an agreement with the English he secured the promise that Cyprus would be given to Greece within a certain time, and

this Anglo-Grecian agreement brought him one with Italy. Signor Tittoni had, effectively, guaranteed to him, during the Peace Conference in Paris, by an agreement signed on July 29, 1919, that Italy would give over to Greece all the islands of the Dodecanese with the exception of Rhodes, and that, as far as Rhodes went, Italy pledged herself to give the island to Greece, after a plebiscite, on the very day that England would give her Cyprus. The same agreement established that Italy pledged herself to give her support to Greece for the annexation of southern Albania; that, on the other hand, Greece undertook to stand by Italy at the Peace Conference in the matter of an Italian mandate over the state of Albania (amputated of its southern part) and to recognize Italian sovereignty over Valona.

When I came to power in July, 1920, and took cognizance of this agreement which Tittoni had kept secret, I absolutely failed to see how it could be of any use to Italy. With no undue breach of modesty, I considered that it was really not for a Great Power like Italy to have written agreements to the effect that Greece should "support" any essential point of Italian interests at the Conference; as for Italian interests in Albania, contrary to what Baron Sonnino had wanted with his London Treaty in 1915, I held that there was absolute contradiction in wanting a living Albanian state on the one hand, and in taking from it at the same time one of its lungs, Valona. For that matter, I was greatly suspicious of an Italian mandate in Albania. Albania, to my mind, was to come into the sphere of Italian influence, but not as a result of a juridical situation wounding Albanian pride and working against the very force of Italian expansion in Albania.

This being so—and bent on setting Italian policy toward ways which seemed to me more in conformity with our

interests—I denounced the Tittoni-Venizelos agreement that meant for us nothing but a series of burdens with no compensatory counterpart.

On July 22, 1920, I informed Venizelos of my decision in a note in which I declared that, making use of a right recognized to me in one of the articles of the said agreement, Italy resumed entire liberty of action on all the points touched upon in this document; but that the Italian Government remained, as before, actuated by a cordial desire for agreement on matters of reciprocal interest; that I trusted that the Hellenic Government entertained the same dispositions toward us, and that I hoped to make with Greece new, satisfactory and complete understandings.

Nothing was more accurate. Hellenism constituted a vital element in the Near East, especially at that time when it still owned throughout the whole of Asia Minor those flourishing colonies which a victorious Turkey was to destroy two years later. And I was, and am, convinced that a nation teeming with life like Italy must go hand in hand with all the life-forces in the common Mediterranean Sea.

Needless to say that, after I had canceled the Tittoni-Venizelos agreement for Rhodes, the British Government did the same for Cyprus.

But when the Foreign Minister of a great power, like Tittoni, goes so far at the Paris Conference as to consider it an important asset to have Venizelos's support, one can not deny that this Venizelos must have had, in the eyes of all, from Lloyd George and Clemenceau to the newcomers begging for land, the sort of legendary power of a charmer, of a siren. The Arabs would have seen in him the *barraka,* the special blessing of Allah that brings luck.

Wilson himself, intractable Wilson, had a foible for him. With him, Venizelos showed the virtues of ancient Greece that Homer attributes to Ulysses. The history of

his first interview with President Wilson in Paris has, until now, only been whispered in the smiling after-dinner conversations of the rare ones who know. After a few minutes of generalities, the American President, thinking the phrase would be equivalent to a dismissal, and so end the conversation, told the Greek Premier that he might be sure of his good will toward Hellenic national aspirations. . . .

"I am grateful, Mr. President," answered the Greek statesman; "but what really matters now is not little Greece; what matters is your great idea of the League of Nations. To work, in the measure of my capacities, toward the realization of this great idea, is my deepest desire; consider me, please, as a soldier at your orders for this task. . . ."

Probably Wilson would have despised flattery from his own countrymen; but he was no match for great Oriental actors. He thought no longer of ending the conversation, and the colloquy went on for more than an hour. Greece was never mentioned.

But when the Ulysside came back to his headquarters, he said only this to his most faithful friends: "I think we have got Smyrna."

Unfortunately for Greece, he was right. As soon as Orlando and Sonnino had left the Conference after their stormy discussion with Wilson about Fiume, Lloyd George, *d'accord* with the American President, summoned Venizelos at once, and, under the flimsy pretext that the progress of Turkish nationalism in Asia Minor was causing anxiety, asked him whether the Greeks would be able to land at Smyrna "within two or three days."

Venizelos, disconcerted by the shortness of the delay he was being given, grasped, however, that the offer was due to a quarrel with the Italians which he felt would be momentary, and unhesitatingly answered yes.

I was then in Constantinople as high commissioner.

There we received, my two colleagues and I, the order to intimate to the Porte that a Hellenic landing at Smyrna had been decided upon. It was a positive order which left me nothing else to do but, for my part, to signify formally to my British colleague that this was a measure which would prove fatal to the Entente and to Greece herself. I shall describe in detail further on, in the chapter on Mustafa Kemal, the occupation of Smyrna and its immediate consequences. But, even without Smyrna, the enforcement of the provisions of the Sèvres Treaty would probably have sufficed to confirm my worst forebodings. During the whole of 1920, at every Inter-Allied conference, our military experts would meet in some room near ours, and under the presidency of Foch would declare each time that neither Great Britain, nor France, nor Italy, had a division to add to those they already kept in the Near East. Then, forward came Venizelos, who, under the fond admiring gaze of Lloyd George, would declare himself ready to undertake the whole job. At the Boulogne Conference (June, 1920) I said: "I am, against all appearances, the only one here who really cares for Greece. Remember that if one may die of hunger, one also dies of indigestion."

Venizelos was not at Boulogne, which enabled Lloyd George to declare that it was easy to "ridicule" the political and military decisions of a statesman who was not there to contradict.

A month afterward, we met again for the lengthy Spa Conference. Venizelos presented himself there for the last time, to urge his proposals before the Supreme Council, and had his way. The Council was composed of Lloyd George, Millerand and myself. Venizelos set forth his reasons for being certain of success. I was the only one to oppose his argument by showing the danger that Greece would run, and I finished my reply with these very words: "My only

regret is that the attitude of Italy should be attributed to want of sympathy for, or even suspicion of, Greece. I feel myself, on the contrary, inspired by sentiments of deep concern for her true interests. No peace is good that is not a peace tolerable for both sides. The Greeks, by gaining too much, risk losing everything. I am quite sure that in this hall, there is at least one person who feels the deep sincerity of my words, and that person is Monsieur Venizelos." I looked at him, and saw that, patriot as he was, he felt for a moment that my words might some day prove too true. But the die was cast.

His basic error, there as before, was to have mistaken the bearing of British support.

Wilson—and it is, I believe, the only case in which his personal temper got the better of his ideas and of his plans—decided to give Smyrna to Greece to take his revenge on the Italians who had refused to fall in with his views about Fiume. But one must acknowledge that Wilson alone could not have been responsible for so great a blunder. A more active and enthusiastic advocate was needed for the Greek cause. This advocate was found in the person of Lloyd George. The reasons for the sudden philhellenism of the British Premier seemed, in 1919 and 1920, so mysterious that diplomats and politicians searched at that time for the most extraordinary explanations. One of these had for a moment a certain vogue in Europe. It was pretended that a somewhat legendary Anglo-Greek banker, Mr. Zaharoff, had succeeded in exercising an exceptional influence, through his weight with the press, et cetera, on the British decisions.

The London atmosphere is, when great problems are at stake, much above reasons of this kind, favored though the latter be by the vulgar imagination of the political secret services: a curse of the war and post-war periods.

As frequently happens, reality was much simpler. It was in part a sentimental inheritance of the old Liberal traditions that Great Britain had to promote the freedom of the Oriental Christian races. Lloyd George was still an emotional young man when the air in England echoed with the Gladstonian phrases about the "unspeakable Turk." But, as often in England, a bigger practical issue was combined with idealistic reasons.

As Gladstone, sincere though he was in his Christian campaign against the Turks, was at the same time aiming a blow at Queen Victoria and her Disraeli, Lloyd George, under the cloak of more or less artificial applications of some of the Wilsonian Fourteen Points, believed he had discovered the way to continue in the East the destruction of the Moslem forces, and so to insure, through the fresh armies of the Greek Kingdom, the British domination in Egypt and in the Arabian world.

Venizelos had spoken to Wilson of the League of Nations; he showed Lloyd George the descendants of Themistocles and Epaminondas in arms again for the conquest of the East. Indeed, during months of common diplomatic conferences, I frequently wondered whether Lloyd George was not speaking and thinking of an old literary Greece, recently discovered by himself, and like all discoveries, beloved by the discoverer.

Nobody admires more than I do the former British Prime Minister's rare qualities of intuition and rapidity of action. During the war, in his quarrels with the generals, he was always right: as when, against them, he stood for breaking the enemy mass with a gigantic Anglo-Italian offensive against Austria, a conception primarily due to one of the noblest Italian patriots, Leonida Bissolati. Even about French strategy, he was frequently right. But West is West, and East is East. And Lloyd George, in the

West, had learned to know for himself. Moreover, he, a frock, was suspicious of the general views of the brass hats; and in the East, what he believed to be military truth was put before him by another frock, Venizelos.

Lloyd George believed that Venizelos would enable him to go on waging war against the Turks with the Greek forces, without using a single Tommy; whence his praises and his presents, with other people's land. The Greek leader's mistake was to suppose that praises and presents meant that British support would never fail Greece, which therefore would be sure of final victory. Lloyd George also wanted final victory, but was decided to pay for it only with Greek blood.

In Greece, the masses felt, better than did their great man, how dangerous the situation was. The 1920 elections were a resounding failure for Venizelos and his party; he himself was not reelected for Athens. Irritated, disappointed, realizing too tardily the risk of the game in which he had engaged his country, he resigned and left Greece.

At this King Constantine returned. Venizelos settled on the French Riviera, married, traveled, and even went to the United States. During one of his stays in Paris, being asked his opinion on the future turn of events in the East, he foretold the victory of the Turks, the defeat of the Greeks, the perpetration of renewed horrors on the Christians of Asia Minor, and finally, the humiliation of the Great Powers by a newly risen Turkey. To the mutual friend who told me—I was then ambassador in Paris—these words which showed that Venizelos had, henceforth, no illusions left as to the future, and that he did not hide from himself the difficulties of the situation in which the Greeks found themselves, I could not help answering that it was the usual case of the clear-sightedness with which

politicians who had loved power too well suddenly become endowed when they fell.

Those Greeks who, without realizing it, love Venizelos even better than their country, have for the disasters he brought on a ready-made excuse: the disasters came when Venizelos was no longer there. This does not do justice to Greece. It would be very unfair to pretend that the Hellenic Army, led by King Constantine who enjoyed a real popularity among soldiers and officers, did not fight valiantly. The dream of a Greater Greece, which had consoled so many generations of *Roumis* during centuries of slavery and misery, gave for several long months a wonderful force of resistance to the Greeks. But the task would have been beyond any army, as they felt at the British War Office when they urged the Hellenes to fight but took care not to send a regiment to help them.

When the frightful military disaster came in September, 1921, and the Greeks were driven into the sea by the Turks, after a stubborn resistance to which contemporary historians have not done justice, King Constantine was once more expelled and Venizelos came back—not to government at Athens, too many hatreds were in arms against him there—but to represent Greece at the Peace Conference in Lausanne. It was his punishment: he signed a treaty by which Greece lost all she had won since 1919. But Greece lost much more: she lost all the rich Hellenic colonies that, for long centuries, had kept in Anatolia the monopoly of trade, navigation, industry.

The whole of this millenary factor of life and progress in the East has been wiped out by the Turks who, following upon the Lausanne agreements, have cast back upon the Hellas coast a million and a half of Asiatic Greeks, yesterday rich and happy, to-day pariahs. That such an event, worthy to rank with the Barbarian invasions of the third

century A.D., can have taken place without arousing the horror of the whole world is one of the proofs of the mental disease and degeneracy that the World War has left behind.

The Turks, to defend themselves, had one word only: Smyrna. The Greek occupation allowed in 1919 by Wilson, offered by Lloyd George and lightly accepted by Venizelos, had become their excuse.

Venizelos personally does not matter much any more, except for Greece. But his fate, and her fate, should remain as one of the most striking lessons of contemporary history. It is indeed difficult, in my opinion, to find a more conclusive proof of this truth, a truth nations seem to have so much trouble in discovering and learning: nothing is more uncertain than that the grandeur and prosperity of a country should be in absolute and direct relations with its territorial acquisitions.

Greece has lost infinitely more—and with her, in a way, Western civilization has also—by the expulsion of Greek people from Asia than by the fact that she had to give up at Lausanne the territories which brought her nearer to Constantinople, the dream of her folk-lore. But this terrible loss has not altered the aspect of maps and atlases; that is why—so much are men like children everywhere—the disaster seems already forgotten.

It may be, indeed, that the newcomers bring to Macedonia and Thessaly elements of transformation and of wealth. Symptoms of this are already becoming apparent. If Venizelos remains in power, to which he came back in 1928, he will one day boast of it. And diplomatic historians will solemnly record his claim. Many in Europe are still fettered by the legends with which certain personalities of the bloody years of the war were embellished for political reasons. With no one, perhaps, is the phenomenon so striking as with Venizelos.

# DEMOCRATIC EUROPE

*A mesure qu'on a plus d'esprit, on trouve qu'il y a plus d'hommes originaux. Les gens du commun ne trouvent pas de différence entre les hommes.*—PASCAL

## XV

### Lloyd George

IT HAS always seemed to me that there was not one Englishman, not even among his own followers, who did not entertain about Lloyd George the same feeling that prevailed about Disraeli in Victorian England, or among Frenchmen of four or five generations ago about Bonaparte. Did not a great part of the success of these leaders of men reside in the fact that they were more or less foreigners in the countries they ruled? Disraeli was, after all, an Italian Jew; Bonaparte was a Corsican, and a Corsican who, while a young student at a French Military School, being teased by the richer and brighter French boys, muttered in his Italian patois: "Ah, I want some day to take my revenge on you, Frenchmen."

In the same way, nothing is more un-English than the genius of David Lloyd George. I could not help feeling so constantly during the years following the signature of the Versailles Treaty, when the chiefs of the Allied Governments used to meet for weeks at a series of peripatetic Supreme Councils, from Boulogne to Paris, from Spa to London. . . .

His first great clash had been with Asquith. And what more English than Asquith and his WAIT AND SEE?

At the Supreme Councils, Lloyd George always came accompanied by Lord Curzon and, occasionally, by men like Churchill, Bonar Law, Austen Chamberlain, Lord Derby. . . . With each one in turn he had sharp disagreements, but with none so constantly or so deeply as with

Curzon. It was one of the rare cases when a man is irritated by all the ways and words of another. A striking personal episode is still in my mind. When the question of recognizing the Baltic States came up at a Supreme Council, Briand, who presided at the meeting, having begun by asking his colleagues' opinion, Curzon was the first to speak. With his solemn Victorian eloquence, which on no occasion he forgot to use, he enlarged for a good half-hour upon the inconvenience and unwisdom of committing ourselves definitely with regard to the rising Baltic States; one could not foresee what the future might bring in this part of Europe, et cetera, et cetera.

I next demanded a hearing, and declared at once that I could not follow the reasoning of my British colleague. It was not possible—I gave among other reasons—to be more Russian than the Russian Government itself; and since that government had recognized Latvia, Esthonia, et cetera . . .

Curzon, certainly not shaken, was about to rise and reply to me, when Lloyd George got up with an air of annoyed impatience and said, in a detached way:

"I have listened to two opposite views. I agree with Count Sforza."

Lord Curzon, always so sensitive in his *amour propre,* reddened deeply; all the members of the Council felt an atmosphere of embarrassment. I tried to save the situation by saying that such divisions of opinion even between statesmen belonging to the same country were the most hopeful signs of progress toward the organic unity of Europe. And so, to use the Chinese expression, Curzon's "face" was saved. While I was speaking, I watched Lloyd George's wonderfully mobile features. My trick evidently amused him; but it was clear that he cared much less than I for Lord Curzon's prestige.

Less conspicuous cases of disagreement I watched be-

tween Lloyd George and Bonar Law, so different from him in his stolid Scotch continuity of thought. I had for Bonar Law a deep personal sympathy, and I believe that the Allies did not render justice to his generosity when he came to Paris in December, 1922, and offered France and Italy the remission of their war debts. But then, as now, I could not help feeling that, could Lloyd George and Bonar Law have been rolled into one, the Scotchman with his cold judgment and his contempt for popularity, and the Welshman with his flashes of genius, a wonderful statesman would have been shaped out of them. Certainly, a great deal of the amazing rapidity of thought of the Welshman would have been lost in the mixture. But I have heard some British Liberal leaders complain that the reason for the decadence of the Liberal Party was simply to be found in the devastating effects of the flood of ideas that fell on it from the hills of Wales; too many ideas for a classical old British party.

But is Lloyd George really a Liberal in the historical British sense of the word? To answer this question is, I believe, to find the clue which may lead to the solving of the astounding Lloyd Georgian enigma.

First of all, what are the Liberals now in English political life? Does one really feel that Lloyd George is at home among the Whigs?

Men like Lloyd George are certainly at home in the stupendous, constant political atmosphere that has been created in British psychology by Liberalism. But Liberalism was so triumphant in England, during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, that it has almost lost its *raison d'être,* as a party. Under any label, all English-thinking politicians are Liberals, from Baldwin to Macdonald. And if this constitutes, after all, the highest victory for a party, it means also its decadence in the practical field of political life. But once acknowledged that

Lloyd George is as deeply Liberal as a Baldwin or a Grey, we must admit that few people are as distant from the remnants of Liberal Party characteristics as he is. Such characteristics can be found to-day in a very few men: in Lord Grey, for instance, and in some political writers like Gilbert Murray or like Spender, the late editor of the *Westminster Gazette*. Highly cultured they were or are, knowing by heart their Horace and their Virgil, having, in a word, a touch of superior mentality which made of them a group of aristocrats, in the sense in which Gladstone, who always refused a title, was an aristocrat.

Now, first of all, David Lloyd George has not that touch. When he went to Oxford for his first visit, he felt the gulf, and saved his pride with this witty *boutade:* "I am so glad I never came here; this place would have been with me all my life; I would never have recovered, and never would have been myself."

By saying this he admitted that the other British leaders owned a common link which he had not.

But this difference is even deeper. Intellectually speaking, Lloyd George belongs to a category not admitted in the nomenclature of the British parties, which alone explains his nature, and even justifies what may have seemed his sudden changes of doctrinarian opinions and personal allegiances: he is a Radical.

Being a Radical and, a Welshman by birth, being imbued with a sort of vague Messianic spirit, Lloyd George is never satisfied with simple party achievements. He may now seem enthusiastic about the Liberal Party; but it is only for tactical reasons, and because of difficulties which exist against him personally, as well in the Unionist field as in the Labor one. But Lloyd George is always thinking of plans beyond the limits of a party; he sees national interests, even international ideas, and for them, if only an opportunity

Lloyd George, on his right Curzon and Sforza, on his left Briand and Barthou. *Standing:* on Sforza's left: Marquis della Torretta, late Italian Ambassador to London; on Lloyd George's left: Sir Maurice Hankey, chief of the diplomatic bureau of the British Prime Minister, a position he still occupies with Mr. Macdonald; on Briand's left: M. Massigli, chief of the French Department for the League of Nations

comes, he is ready to trample upon traditions, dogmas, doctrines, and probably also upon engagements.

Those who deny authentic essence of a Radical in Lloyd George point to his palinode during the 1918 general election, when he upheld many jingo slogans to which he had always been contrary, and soon was to be contrary again: "the Kaiser a prisoner in the London Tower," "Germany to pay all the reparations," "up to the last penny," and so on.

These were simply "abilities," concessions to tactical tricks which are sometimes indulged in—as I think it is the case with Lloyd George—by leaders who began their political or intellectual life with an intense enthusiasm, in which a religious or sectarian inspiration was a stronger agent than a philosophical or moral conception. A natural reaction leads them, in the course of time, to jugglings that a man born with a certain amount of aristocratic skepticism would never deign to perform. For that matter, even during this period, he was, in reality, far less affirmative than he seemed to be to the maddened crowds of England and of the Continent. His loudest assertions were hemmed around with a series of prudent *if's* and *but's*. But he spoke these in a manner so much less vehement that they remain to show his foresight rather than his courage.

"They shall pay to the last penny," he shouted for instance. And in a minor tone, which was not then perceived, he added: "if they can do so without endangering the reconstruction of Europe."

Or:

"They shall pay the maximum." And, sotto voce: "but the maximum will be ascertained by financial experts."

During the long days we spent together in some of the post-war Supreme Councils, I sometimes alluded to this difference of tone between some of his assertions and did not

hide from him that I was wondering whether a firmer bearing on his part would not have served the advent of a real peace better.

"No," he answered to me once in Paris, while we were dining together at his hotel, the Crillon, "no, it was too soon to expect crowds who had bled so heavily to recover their moral balance at once. We had to give satisfaction to the crowds; but, at the same time, insert in the treaty clauses for revision."

He was sincere in this Wilsonian thesis of his, but I could not help thinking that he would not have been so clever, nor so agile, had he not begun his career in an atmosphere of Messianic enthusiasm. When he began being clever he overdid it.

In order not to give any undue importance to the endless transactions and to the mental pirouettes of the present Lloyd George, one must remember young Lloyd George. During his first electoral campaign he had said to his cheering crowds: "My friends, my countrymen, the day of the cottage-bred man has at last dawned!" It was not a demagogue's phrase; he deeply felt thus. And it is full of Biblical enthusiasm that the young lawyer, who had learned some poor Latin with infinite pain in his village, went to Westminster.

After the first parliamentary debate on a temperance bill, he wrote to a beloved uncle who had helped him, poor as both were, to study the few courses he needed to enter the legal career: "No fervour, no earnestness characterized this debate. The House does not seem at all to realize or to be impressed with the gigantic evil of drunkenness."

This is the real Lloyd George; in spite of appearances, in spite of the tricks men have taught him,—and which he has learned so well that now he is a past master in tricks,—he has constantly remained faithful, at the bottom of his

heart, to some human ideals; and those ideals he puts before any party allegiance. That is why he is a Radical. His tactical agility, his lack of constancy in friendships, his oratorical skill, have ended by giving him a dubious reputation, even among those who ought to be his political friends. But that in his heart he has always remained deeply faithful to the ideals of peace among the nations, of social progress, of human brotherhood, there is no doubt for those who, like myself, have been in a position to judge him outside of the resentments and passions of home party life.

In the post-war period of European reconstruction I have more than once appealed to him on behalf of Italian interests, but for a solution which, at the same time, was necessary to secure a general peace, like, for instance, a generous and far-seeing settlement between Italy and Yugo-Slavia. When he saw my point, when he felt that my vision of Italian interests and prestige was essentially linked in my mind with the progress of real European peace, he gave me unstintingly a warm and loyal support. It was enough for him to feel that he was serving the future of Europe. If he did see that the interests of England were the same as the interests of Europe, it does not decrease his merit. On the contrary.

In the historical episode I have recalled, other British statesmen did not "see" at once as he did. They tried in vain to bargain with me. Lloyd George told me, a few months later, with a smile: "No, it was not British selfishness, it was simply stupidity."

In Paris, where everything ends not "in songs," as they said in the days of the Fronde, but in "mots," it was said of the British delegates at the Peace Conference of 1919: "Balfour knows, but does not care; Bonar Law cares, but does not know; Lloyd George does not know and does not care."

As in most *boutades,* there was some truth in this one; but essentially, in its disparagement of Lloyd George, it is untrue. Lloyd George did not know, in the sense in which an expert knows; he was even rather glad and proud of it, because he had known too closely the misapprehensions of the "man who has been there"; and if it is true that he did not care, it was only for the means, the instruments, the modes of procedure; one may not really say that he ever deliberately betrayed the ideas of progress and of democracy.

One may even say that, once in his life, this versatile man was unswervingly faithful to one method, one means—and that he thus committed his greatest political blunder. I mean the doggedness with which he stuck, in the face of failures and opposition, to the idea of exterminating the Turks by means of Greece.

The fruits of his Oriental policy may still be seen in Turkey, whence all European influence has disappeared; in Constantinople, now a dead city; in Thrace, in Greece, bled white. For three years, from 1919 till 1923, he pursued a policy which devastated Asia Minor, destroyed Smyrna, abandoned the Armenian and all other Christian minorities to Turkey, and culminated in the still incomprehensible Chanak incident when, after having called the whole world to mobilize against the Turks, he was left alone by Italy and by France, and when he endangered the very cornerstones of the British Empire by putting the loyalty of several of the dominions to too severe a test. This unique manifestation of a Lloyd Georgian fidelity to one scheme had begun at the Peace Conference where the British Premier swallowed whole Venizelos's "megala idea" for a Greater Greece.

How it happened that, precisely in this tremendous error, Lloyd George never changed either his idea or his

methods, is still for me an unsolved psychological riddle. I should know something of the matter, for I think I may put forward safely that I was—in this controversy—Lloyd George's most decided and most avowed opponent. My Italian predecessors, Sonnino and Orlando, were, like myself, opposed to his Greek policy; but it could be insinuated that their opposition was partly due to secret designs on Smyrna; whereas I had declared that I did not want a parcel of Turkish territory. Briand, Millerand and Poincaré had too great a need of British support on the Rhine to thwart Lloyd George's Oriental policy too openly. How often, during Supreme Councils at Boulogne, Spa, Paris and London was I alone in pointing out to him, at great length, the dangers he was leading Greece into, and in foretelling what finally happened: that this very struggle of the West against Turkey was going to give the latter strength enough to pull herself together and to come to life again! Sometimes Lloyd George's small, glowing and magnetic eyes would betray that a doubt had entered his mind. But it was short-lived. Very quickly, his rooted idea would regain the upper hand.

When one admires deeply, as I do, not only Lloyd George's intelligence but his almost medium-like sensitiveness, one is led to venture this explanation as the only plausible one: that, if he stuck so stubbornly to his mistake, it was because he, more than any one else, had finally realized the unforgivable emptiness of his undertaking; and that, skeptical as he had become about the hazards of war, he had staked his all on it, thinking that—who knows?—he was perhaps right after all. In which case he would have been right in the face of a general opposition. This means, I am afraid, one of those somber thoughts that hide in the very depths of a human soul—thoughts that one barely owns to oneself: that, if he lost the game, he could, probably even

with ease, obtain forgiveness on the grounds of the "Freedom of the Seas," the "Christian traditions," and of other fetishes of the kind; but that if he won,—ah! if he won,—he would not only have destroyed the Turks but any rival to a semi-eternal British premiership. . . .

As for the French adventuress, Eugénie Bonaparte, in 1870, it was, after all, *"sa guerre."*

And when one has *"sa guerre,"* one must pay for it.

# XVI

## Bonar Law

BONAR LAW'S name will be preserved from oblivion because he held, if only for a few months, the post of British prime minister. None of his predecessors is forgotten in English history, not even a man as insignificant as Goderich who held the post for even a shorter time and resigned rather than meet the House of Commons.

The external qualifications of Bonar Law in English parliamentary history will be that he was the first prime minister to come from business, the second being Mr. Baldwin.

Andrew Bonar Law, the man who became one of the most successful leaders of the Conservative Party, was not born to hereditary wealth, like so many of his predecessors in this leadership or in Downing Street. He had neither family connections nor Eton and Oxford friendships to smooth his path to success. The son of a Presbyterian minister, young Law spent his earliest years in Canada. When the time for high school came he was sent to Glasgow, his mother's birthplace; and there he remained when school-days were over, as a young man of business.

But as soon as he thought he had made enough money, he decided, like Joseph Chamberlain before him, to try political life. He retired from his iron business in 1900 and entered Parliament as a Conservative member for one of the Glasgow divisions.

He made his mark quickly. His maiden speech, a defense of the South African War, attracted attention and

won him the admiration of the House, not so much because of eloquence—of which he had very little in the Gladstonian and Lloyd Georgian sense of the word—but because of its argumentative power.

One evening in London he told me and a few other friends his recollections about this speech. Conscious of his success he looked over the papers on the following morning and read that "Mr. Bonar Law had spoken with characteristic dullness."

"They were wrong," he said, "as far as the speech was concerned, because I had not been so dull. But they were right in this: that the thing remained like the symbol of my future life; I always had more friends and influence in Parliament than outside."

I might have replied, had it been possible for me to make such a personal remark, that in the post-war period his personality was more appreciated and liked by his foreign colleagues in the Inter-Allied Supreme Councils than by his British colleagues.

Bonar Law had an essential quality; and he showed it during his nine years of leadership of the Conservative Party, and later on as Cabinet minister: he had the gift of always understanding the plain man's point of view, and the mental agility and the moral courage necessary to go above and beyond this common point of view—if need be.

In this especially he reminded me of a great Italian parliamentary leader, Giolitti, which was possibly one of the reasons of my sympathy for him, to say nothing of the fact that I found him a rest after Lloyd George's ceaseless fireworks.

Bonar Law succeeded the latter as prime minister on October 23, 1922. His speeches during the electoral campaign which followed almost immediately sharply marked

his departure from the Lloyd Georgian style. He declared for a policy of tranquillity and for a reduction of commitments abroad and at home. Never was an election a greater contrast to the promises that Lloyd George showered over England on such occasions. Bonar Law made not a single promise. But the electors had got sick of them; and Bonar Law with his simplicity and tranquillity seemed to them the man of the moment. He appeared to Great Britain as an altogether plainer man than all his predecessors. But everybody was tired of Lloyd George, who had been adored in 1918. The English at last found themselves in Bonar Law. His success was the British reaction against Lloyd George's brilliancy.

In reality, his candor and sincerity did not preclude in him the kind of skill that soon becomes second nature with the politician. But what was new and winning was that he owned as much. I heard him myself declare one evening at a small dinner-party among colleagues of the Supreme Council at the modest restaurant of the House of Commons: "I am not so simple as I look."

His habit of always giving, in the parliamentary debates, the perfectly sensible and expected reply was, truth to tell, the result of consummate art. Passionately fond of chess, he carried his passion into the problems of politics and into the technique of his speeches. If he was always giving the impression of the right and sensible reply, it was because he looked only at the pieces on the chess-board, as if they constituted the whole of the argument. Given an English audience, a second person, rising and showing that there were deeper causes in the past and broader links with the future, would have seemed only a cloudy and un-English framer of hypotheses in comparison with Bonar Law. Bonar Law's quietness, his *terre-à-terre* reasonableness, his attention to the tangible part of an opponent's argument,

would always bring into relief anything overdone in the adversary's attitude.

And yet, there was in Bonar Law something un-English that was due perhaps to his trans-Atlantic origin. This leader of the Conservative Party was devoid of taboo ideas about Conservative traditions. This Presbyterian from Canada had no English reverence for Aristocracy, for Upper Classes, for the Army, for the Church; not even for the City, as he showed when he acknowledged that there was a case for Capital Levy. In a word, Bonar Law's conservatism was not based on tradition or on love for certain characteristics of English life. He was a Conservative because he was cautious, because he was distrustful of people proceeding more than one step at a time, "because," as Lloyd George once sneeringly remarked, "he respected success, not as success but as a fact."

His health was very weak; and he bore the strain of his premiership for only six months. His voice failed, and he went to France for a complete rest. When he returned to London on May 20, 1923, he felt he was too ill to take his duties over again and resigned.

Five months later, he died.

His state of health accounts for the failure of his attempt to settle with France, Italy and Belgium the common German reparations problem and that of the war debts. It was a generous and far-seeing initiative; it is no exaggeration to say that the acceptance of his plan would have markedly hastened European reconciliation and would probably have exercised singular influence, through the power of precedent, on the question of the American debts. Besides, several of the ideas of the Bonar Law plan were taken up again, in identical fashion, in the Dawes plan.

No one did justice either to the plan or to its author. Worse still, in the countries most generously favored by it,

like Italy, a press muzzled by the Fascist Government covered Bonar Law with insults. In France likewise, incomprehension was complete.

When Bonar Law came to Paris in January, 1923, to submit his settlement plan to an Inter-Allied Conference with Poincaré and Mussolini, then just come to power, the doctors had advised against the journey; they had even gone so far as to say that the strain might prove altogether fatal to him. To which Law had answered: "That is no argument."

But if the moral grit was not lacking, he had not sufficient strength left for the persuasive spirit that alone might have dispelled French hesitations and Fascist incomprehensions.

Bonar Law offered France and Italy precious concessions: British solidarity on the question of German reparations, and an official recognition of the interdependence of reparations and war debts. For Italy especially, the Bonar Law plan was such that we could with difficulty have imagined a better one ourselves. It meant, practically, the canceling of our war debts to England. Mussolini's refusal can only be explained by the fact that, newly come to power then and desirous of spectacular *coups,* he was indulging in a journalistic naïve belief (he acknowledged it in interviews at the time) in a Continental bloc against England. I shall, in another chapter, speaking of Poincaré, explain the reasons for the French opposition.

Three months after his failure in Paris, Bonar Law was seeking in the calm of Aix-les-Bains a relief to his dreadful sufferings. As I happened to be staying in a neighboring château, he asked to see me. He wanted to ask me an explanation of what was still a riddle to him: why his plan, so useful to France and so generous to Italy, had been rejected with jeers and sarcasms.

I told him what I thought had been his psychological mistakes, where he, or his people, had lacked the necessary persuasive power.[1]

He listened to me with the sad smile I knew so well and, taking from his mouth the fake pipe that was all he was allowed, said:

"I see; had Lloyd George offered half of what I was bringing, they would have knelt at his feet."

There was no bitterness, only, with the loyal recognition of his limitations, an expression of contempt for the vulgarity that so often lies hidden in success.

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[1] I told him among other things (the manner was meant to keep up the spirits of a sick man, but, pleasant form aside, I was firmly convinced of the matter): "Another serious obstacle was the Reparations Commission. Your plan rendered that useless; those gentlemen, earning the highest salaries in Europe, felt it, and suddenly discovered in your system all possible faults, risks and dangers. Had I been there, I think a great deal of the opposition you encountered would have melted, for I should have proposed this transitory article: 'It is understood that the salaries of the present chiefs of the Reparations Commission will be paid them as long as they live, even after the dissolution of the Commission.'"

Bonar Law laughed: "Such a pity you resigned just two months before." It was probably his last laugh.

## XVII

### Balfour

MY GRANDFATHER used to tell me an anecdote of which I did not understand the full meaning until, as a young man entering the Italian diplomatic service, I began seeing something of British diplomats and politicians.

This was my grandfather's simple story: The great Gladstone, in the 'eighties, came for a last time to Italy, the Italy he had defended, forty years before, against the misrule and oppression of the Bourbons. A banquet was tendered to him by a group of Italians, all of them refined men of culture. An old Italian statesman rose at the end to propose the guest's health; during his speech, he quoted three verses of Horace; but he missed the second part of the last verse and was evidently at a loss trying to recall it. . . . Not one of the Italian diners, most of whom were, like my grandfather, quite conversant with the Latin classics, was able, on the spur of the moment, to help the orator; it was the old Gladstone who broke the silence and suggested the missing half of the hexameter.

Probably, one or two generations ago, many among the English politicians, especially the Oxford or Cambridge men, would have been able to do what the Grand Old Man did. Now? Now, classical culture is more easily discovered among German and French statesmen and politicians than among their British colleagues. To speak only of men below fifty, it would be difficult to discover at present in England an equivalent to Edouard Herriot.

The highest type of British public man still living, who

owes a great part of his intellectual formation to a classical training, is certainly Arthur Balfour. When this type of man will have disappeared from the scene of English public life, a greater change will have come into the atmosphere of the British commonwealth than practical men can realize. Who can deny that London, as a center of the Empire, draws an important element of attraction from the respect that men coming from the Dominions feel for the superior aristocratic mentality of a Salisbury and a Rosebery yesterday, of a Cecil and a Balfour to-day? It is only chance that made me quote four names related to nobility. A Morley, a Fisher, an Asquith, a Cromer, a Haldane, although all of them of modest origins, belonged to this type of intellectual British aristocracy. The men of the Lord Northcliffe type may acquire as many peerages as they long for; they will never belong to this group of British aristocrats. And, proudly, even the humblest instinctively feel in this way in England and do not admit the new lords into their conception of aristocracy.

Balfour has been almost everything in British public life: party leader, prime minister, plentipotentiary to Versailles and to Washington, even creator of a State,—Palestine. In spite of all that, of his books, of his culture, the newspaper men have plastered a label on him: laziness. Rarely do public men succeed in escaping a label.

The truth is that Balfour is not lazy: he has been simply too proud to seek office; and this has wrongly been taken for laziness. An American friend of mine told me an anecdote about Balfour that shows his laziness when British interests are at stake. At one of the Commissions during the Paris Peace Conference my friend, who had become a sort of American expert for the Near East, was making a report about what seemed to him some incorrect forms of activity of British agents in Syria and Transjordania. Balfour was

dozing beside his colleagues. The American expert ended his frank report, which looked almost like an indictment, and was going to retire, when Balfour, opening an eye, asked for some supplementary information on very difficult points. The American expert honestly answered that he was not documented on those points. Balfour said in a cutting tone, quite in contradiction to his previous mien: "What I have asked, gentlemen, is essentially linked with the whole of the British action; we may therefore dismiss as of no importance the charges this gentleman has made, certainly with full sincerity, but with no sufficient competence."

My American friend knew that he was right; but what—he still wonders with me—was left for him to do, but to retire?

So it has always been in all international negotiations: this tall, slack, inelegant man, with his dreamy eyes, and his hands behind his back, has always been ready to admit all hypotheses, all sorts of intellectual doubts, as long as the conversation maintained itself in the field of generalities. He awakens at once, rigid on the main points, but free from any appearance of jingo intolerance, as soon as the practical diplomatic entity of the British Empire is concerned.

Let us imagine for a moment an analogously contradictory moral and intellectual conduct of life, with an American, or Italian, or French statesman or diplomat. We may readily see the unpleasant conclusions that everybody—to begin with, Englishmen—would draw.

Nothing would be more unjust in the case of Balfour, or if one may generalize, in the case of the Balfour type. It is, with these, a sort of hereditary instinct that creates a double personality. The man of reason, in a Balfour or in a Morley, admits and understands everything; but the man of reason is subjected, in a practical problem, to a sort of

instinctive statesmanship, which, in spite of the generalizations of the philosopher, has only one rule and one formula: "My country, right or wrong."

(True, that the man of reason might come forward and say: "My double admits at least that his country may be *wrong;* do you not know certain Continental types for whom their country is always *right?*")

Another semblance of contradiction may be detected in the Balfour type, when one considers the neglect of form, the contempt for eloquence,—be it classically Gladstonian or prophetically Lloyd Georgian,—the apparent contempt for any unnecessary display of intellectual ability, which are, all of them, characteristic of the group.

Deeply sincere they are. It is with them an aristocratic contempt for appearances and for cheap success. But they know quite well at the same time that this simplicity of speech and gesture, this apparent lack of art, constitutes one of their secret ways to win confidence and respect.

Balfour gave a striking example of this art, made up of apparent lack of art, when he went to New York during the Washington Conference in the autumn and winter of 1921. As the first British plenipotentiary, Balfour had done his work in Washington with unusual skill; he had captivated everybody with his assumed innocence of all diplomatic tricks, with his scientific habit of hesitating, with the sure taste that forbade him to be brilliant.

But when he was invited to a great banquet given in his honor in New York by an important group of Americans whose leader was no less than John W. Davis, former ambassador to London and afterward Democratic candidate for the presidency, the few English friends who went with him to the banquet trembled—I have it from one of them—at the idea that in his laziness he would get up and search painfully, hesitatingly, as he used to do and still

Balfour

does. Their nervousness had increased at the banquet, after a speech from the chairman, Davis, which was perfection in form, dignity and taste.

After Davis, Balfour rose.

He began in his unprepared way, feeling about for words and periods, ill-treating the syntax, correcting and hesitating as he used to do in the House of Commons and at scientific lectures. His compatriots, mortified, wondered whether he would ever get into his stride. Well, Balfour went on hesitatingly till the end, with hints at great ideas, which he hardly developed, with a few faint touches of humor, and he ended without the customary warm phrases, which, alas, everybody puts at the end of a speech, to remind the audience that the time has come to clap.

It was a tremendous success. This was what they wanted of him. So English, so Oxford, so distinguished . . . these were the general remarks. Balfour was all the time in Washington, as on the evening of the banquet in New York, just the type of English statesman that the best Americans expected to see. And Balfour knew, even if his friends did not, that this was the way, his way, to have such a success. Which does not mean in the least that there was in him the smallest part of insincerity.

This sort of style can only be acquired by men who may enjoy coming to power because they believe they have something to do or to give, but who, personally, are at least as glad when political events oblige them to resign. They are men who would be ashamed to be only politicians; they are themselves, and they accept political duties only because life or social position has thrown diplomatic or parliamentary jobs in their way. No climbers, no party intriguers, no boasters, no demagogues, with no illusions about popularity and fame, these men are the best servants of their country, but—by a fatal contradiction—they are poor leaders of

parties and groups. Their revenge lies in the fact that public opinion turns to them in painful periods, when the men *à succès* shrink from unpopular decisions.

In England these men are—or were, I am afraid, for England—a better set than on the Continent; because on the Continent the devotion to the State may take the form of a dislike of liberty or at least of an excess of belief in bureaucratic efficiency.

Balfour always disliked the type of public man who, as he once told me *à propos* of Curzon, "might have become a minister in suffocating Hohenzollern Germany."

Balfour, never. Leader of the Conservative Party as he has been, Balfour is a Liberal at heart; and probably he has always considered George Curzon as an anachronism. A democrat in spite of his aristocratic background—his mother was a Cecil, a sister of the Marquis of Salisbury—what is probably true of Balfour is that he lacked real sympathy for the rising classes, for the millions who had been enfranchized. Through superior intelligence he understood that there was no use in building sand-banks against the rising waves; but he had no message for his humbler countrymen.

Whence this strange contradiction: that there is no room left in England for men of the Balfour type; but that, at the same time, when all of them will have disappeared, Great Britain will have lost one of the noblest elements of her public life?

With their shortcomings, the men of the Balfour type had, in their manner of thinking and living, a humanistic element which gave them a greater serenity and a wider outlook than can be found in the new set of dividend-politicians. An exclusively British trait, it gave them a higher and more serene form of patriotism. With men like Balfour, patriotism always took the form of an extreme

horror of national boasting; of a loyal love of peace; of a certain slowness to take offense (which is the best form of pride); of a certain readiness to compromise; and above all, and there lay their superior form of patriotism, of an instinctive and sure knowledge that their Britain had in the last resort the power to enforce their claims.

The present generation in England, even its younger members, still feel the difference between the two types of leaders.

No matter if the type of the intellectual aristocrat, of the classical scholar, finds no more followers. It is still surrounded by a general respect and reverence: respect and reverence which are not felt in the least for the new set of leaders. For all their intellectual training and eloquence, and—when they happen to acquire them, which is frequent—for all their titles of viscount and baron, they are considered as plebeians.

But this feeling remains because Balfour is still alive; and Asquith and Morley and Haldane are still in the memory of every one. The link, however, will be broken some day. Nobody will ever realize that the pure light has gone. And this will be the saddest and surest proof that one of the best among the individualistic human types has disappeared for ever.

## XVIII

### Chamberlain

BEHIND frock coat, top hat and monocle—shields to hide an incurable shyness—even Sir Austen Chamberlain is a living man, if only because he is pathetically torn between two contradictory feelings: the sense of his own importance; the honest recognition of his own limitations.

One day, everybody will acknowledge a thing which Mr. Baldwin probably never doubted: namely, that the direction of British diplomacy, as it was managed by Sir Austen Chamberlain until the general elections of 1929 swept him away with the whole of the Conservative Cabinet, was the weakest and most hesitating that England has ever known.

In one direction only was Sir Austen Chamberlain's action happy: when he withstood the influences that existed around him in favor of high-handed methods in China. But then, it was a case of *not* doing.

As soon as a bully or a threat appeared on the scene in Europe, Sir Austen would tell himself that he must pay the bully a great deal of attention and make allowance for the threats. One would have said—a unique case in the history of England—that he did not believe in the power of his country. Son of the man who had spoken of Russia with such virulence and who had spared nothing and no one, he himself recalled rather the skeptical discouragement of the Venetian patricians who, having lost the pride and courage of their fathers, were, on the eve of the fall of the

Sir Austen Chamberlain

*Serenissima,* wondering in fear and trembling, "What will Bonaparte do with us?"

A sincere friend of the League of Nations, all Chamberlain's interventions at Geneva were made to prevent reforms, to delay disarmament, to warn against all generous ideas. He recalled the old lady who had read in the Bible that faith can remove mountains, and prayed that the mountain which blocked the view from her cottage might be "cast into the depths of the sea." When, on the following morning, she rose and looked out from her window, she sighed: "I knew it would not go."

Well-meaning withal; but, simply—a passive man.

When a Continental political writer of high moral standing once expressed his surprise at Geneva that all the adventurers of European politics received so warm a welcome from him, he answered:

"It is my job to shake the hands that my King must not shake."

At Locarno—the diplomatic event with which his name will remain associated—Chamberlain's limitations, indeed, were just as useful as his qualities. Locarno was one of those cases where success is inevitable. For Stresemann who had been the first to suggest the negotiation, and Briand who had agreed to it, were bound, on pain of a fall of their Cabinets, to go back to their respective countries with an agreement; and the agreement came to pass.

It needed all the blindness of Fascist demagogy to make all the gagged newspapers of Italy declare with required unanimity that the Conference was doomed to certain failure.

But it also needed all the honest guilelessness of Sir Austen Chamberlain to believe, in all good faith, that the Conference had more than once been on the verge of disaster—whereas it was merely a question of the ups and

downs and give and take that happen at every diplomatic meeting. The great merit of Stresemann and of Briand is real, but it resides in the fact of their having gone to Locarno to negotiate as equals, and as equals who see the advantages of a loyal and free agreement.

From Locarno, Sir Austen got the Garter and two lines in the future English history books. It is since then that he has been definitely lost, for he never recovered from his surprise at becoming a great man; and out went the solid if modest qualities of balance which he had before.

Lesson: It happens, more often than one thinks, in public life, that honest, mediocre men succeed, by chance, in giving their name to some important reform. But, as the thing has happened without them, they can do nothing more but remain in admiration of their unique achievement, since they are incapable of any new initiative. Pathetic to watch, they are at once the lovers and the grave-diggers of their past deed. Like Chamberlain who, to any proposal for a widening and strengthening of the Locarno work, could only answer like an automatic echo, "We at Locarno."

Sad and comical at the same time—but useful if its meaning be understood—this sight of the Locarno man for whom Locarno fame changed so rapidly into a Westminster tombstone.

## XIX

### Poincaré

WHEN I was in Paris as ambassador, Millerand was president of the Republic, and Poincaré president of the Council of Ministers. In home policy, Millerand was accused of barring the current which was driving France toward the Left. Poincaré, although approved by the Right for his foreign policy, never lacked the confidence of the Left, sure of his deep and warm loyalty not only to the form but to the very spirit of the Republican institutions.

By previous personal experience Poincaré knew the difficulties that surround any possible action of the president of the Republic. He had been president himself during the war; he had tried to have errors avoided; but his Prime Minister, Clemenceau, had been a jailer to him. The prison was a gilded cage—the exquisite Palais de l'Élysée—but a cage nevertheless.

Poincaré himself has frequently told me that if he ever writes his personal recollections, he will borrow the title from a masterpiece of Italian literature, *Le mie Prigioni* (My Prisons), by Pellico, the Italian patriot.

Probably Clemenceau added to the difficulties of the situation of the French President—whose power, as everybody knows, much more closely resembles that of the King of England than that of the American President—by the ruthless violence of his temperament, which always made him disagreeable to his very friends.

Nevertheless, one might remember that Clemenceau was perhaps one of the unwilling authors of Poincaré's

election to the presidency of the Republic in 1913, simply because, being strongly opposed to Poincaré, and asked, when he arrived at Versailles for whom he would vote, he answered:

*"Je vote pour le plus stupide,"* meaning by that Monsieur Pams, the millionaire candidate, Poincaré's adversary.

While Clemenceau always governed by fear, Poincaré has always governed, if not by love, at least with the consent of the governed. Unlike Clemenceau, Poincaré has no censorship at his disposal; he can not send his political opponents before a court-martial or even a High Court of Justice. Yet Poincaré's authority continues and remains unchallenged, whether he be in power or out of it.

Contrary to Clemenceau, who was conspicuous in many ways, and who liked to be conspicuous; contrary even to Briand and to Caillaux, to speak only of Frenchmen, Poincaré has no apparent emanation of personality; he has no magnetism. He comes from those serious and dull French upper middle classes, than which nothing could be duller or more respectable in the world, except what remains of the Victorian type of British middle classes.

Thus, it is all the stranger that few statesmen have been as deeply discussed, as differently interpreted, as Poincaré has been. One of his best biographers wrote on the very first page of his study: "One feels the mystery of the man."

In reality, there is no enigma in Poincaré. He is a great lawyer, a Lorraine lawyer, Lorraine being a frontier province; he has had from his very nursery days constant thoughts of Germany—which does not mean in the least hatred of Germany, as the French "Nationalists" hate Germany. Poincaré, the Lorrainer, knows better; he knows well that Germany is there, and that some real peace ought to be found.

When he became President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1922 he gave the impression that he was holding the brief for the Treaty of Versailles before the world. He was so uncompromising that more than once at the time I heard this word uttered, from British lips: "Shylock."

In reality, he has been constantly inclined (if we except the period of the Ruhr, for which I shall point out an interpretation of my own a little further on), he has always been ready, like all Lorrainers, to make peace with the Germans the moment Germany discharges her obligations.

Like all Lorrainers, I said. Often during certain small dinner-parties in Paris, when I was ambassador there, I spent long evenings talking in some quiet corner, with Maurice Barrès, then at the apex of literary glory and hailed in fashionable circles as the prophet of anti-German patriotism. In spite of all appearances to the contrary, Barrès was deeply skeptical; he really believed only in the beauty and music of words. And yet was indeed possessed, not in his mind but instinctively, of that touchingly naïve "patriotism" which is conceived as the necessity of hating some object. But the object with him was above all England. He felt, more than he spoke, as if Joan of Arc had been burned about the time of the *Affaire Dreyfus.*

If there is a touch of paradoxical contradiction, but no enigma, in Poincaré's political life, I see it in his home policy. Poincaré, for all his conservative poise, is a sincere democratic Republican. One might even go so far as to say that, intellectually speaking, he is something of the Radical. When he may do so freely and without danger, he never loses an opportunity to display his feelings; he does so, for instance, any time there is a danger, or an appearance of danger, of an excess of Catholic influence in the life of France. When a young deputy in the French Chamber he

felt the danger of clericalism during the tragedy of the *Affaire Dreyfus,* and he never forgot the lesson. In spite of that he is generally supported by majorities elected on a ticket opposed to his own, while he is almost always abused in the press and in the Chamber by his political, or to be more exact, by his intellectual co-religionists of the democratic parties.

Poincaré has an old Republican's respect for the Constitution; he has the lawyer's inbred respect for law. Success has not made him a leader for whom men hold a deep affection. What is rarer and, in a way, beautiful, is the fact that he has no longings for such feelings, nor for the warmth that may come from them.

It is his very temperament that obliges him to work in solitude. I watched his way with great curiosity when, in 1922-24, he was at the Foreign Office. He had some able collaborators, but none worked quickly enough for him; he accepted dates and documentations from them, but all the logical construction of a note or a memorandum was worked out and decided on by him; most frequently, even all the wording was his own. Incapable of using the labor of others as a substitute for his own, he is like a sculptor who would want to be quarryman as well.

With an astounding capacity for work, he finds time for everything. In 1929—he was again prime minister but with the portfolio of Finances—I had got tired of waiting for certain trifling sums that the French Administration owed me for a small property at sunny Sainte-Maxime near Toulon, and decided to write to him. After twenty days I received his answer—and the check. But nothing had been done in a dictatorial way, to please a so-called important foreigner. . . . No, he had gone through the channels of the administration, he had discovered where the delay had occurred, and he had seen to it that everybody involved in the case was paid, not only the "important foreigner."

This omniscience of his is the secret both of his lasting successes and of his psychological failures—because, by his methods, leaving nothing to imagination, to improvisation, to instinct, Poincaré runs the risk, sometimes, of becoming the prisoner of his own mental processes. He wins his way with his colleagues in the Cabinet or with the majority in Parliament by the sheer force of a mind made up.

This might savor of a kind of mental limitation. Nothing, in my opinion, would be more erroneous: and there lies, so I always felt, the tragedy of Poincaré's soul—of a soul whose inner secrets he discloses to none, not out of pride, but out of a sort of mental pudency, a trait which is not infrequently found in the noblest French minds.

Once he has constructed a formula exactly expressing his thoughts about something essential, like the German reparations or the French occupation of the Rhineland or the French debt to the United States, he repeats his phrases with unrelenting regularity in speech after speech, week after week. So extreme *appears* his mental rigidity that he impresses one with a complete inability to admit of a controversial discussion.

Poincaré gives thus such an irritating impression of mapping out affairs in a strict order of his own, leaving no margin for give and take, that one often sighs: "Such a great ruler, this man would be, if only the human race were a collection of mechanical toys."

In reality, the more I have thought about him the more I have ended by considering this ironical *boutade* as a supreme injustice. I came to this conclusion after a careful study of Poincaré's mind during what some have considered his main political error: the occupation of the Ruhr.

I had, meanwhile, when Fascism came to power in Italy, resigned; but, sorry as I was to give up a work which I had hoped would further the peace of our people, there was

one reason which brought me a secret feeling of relief. My frequent conversations with Poincaré had left me convinced that he was bound to do something which would show that French diplomacy was no longer going to be lectured to and guided by the British Government.

The same thing was happening then which I had constantly watched before, when Italian minister for foreign affairs, in many of the Supreme Councils which followed the conclusion of the Treaty of Versailles. Certain statesmen had wished to force France to revise her opinions too rapidly, and, therefore, they had gone the wrong way. Although sincerely desirous of helping France by indicating the best course to her, they only increased her bitterness and her distrust. Better work for European reconciliation was done, I dare to say, by those who, like myself, loyally sided with France in a great number of questions, but who gave her a friendly warning when the time really had come for her to accept a new situation.

This, and no other, was the practical way in the period I allude to, and even during my Paris Embassy,—to exert over French statesmen an influence all the more efficacious in that it was modest and not self-advertising.

I do not mean to suggest that the point of view was correct of which Sir Austen Chamberlain was the most qualified representative, namely, that France was passing through an acute nervous crisis; that the sudden elation of victory had been too much for her; that all that was wanted was to hold the hand of the feverish patient while her temperature was still abnormal; and that one day she would wake up having quite forgotten the nightmare in which she was seeing the Huns marching again *nach Paris*.

This theory, charitable and friendly as it was meant to be, was not a very deep view of the situation. It came from the old, futile and false European belief that the

French are an unstable, mutable, frivolous people. This belief is quite as fictitious as that which would have the Germans phlegmatic and devoid of imagination. France—I mean provincial and permanent France, of which Poincaré is one of the most representative types, not the froth and bubble revealed by a certain aspect of Paris—is an intensely conservative society. Everything contributes to make her so: her small landed property, her respect for family ties, her religious cult of inheritance, her economic self-sufficiency, her rooted nationalism. Any one tempted to pass too summary a sentence on the military and diplomatic activity of France in the early post-war period should remember that no other country has a tradition of European power and influence so ancient or so proud. Italy was divided till 1860; Germany was the shadow of an empire; England never counted in Continental politics till a foreigner, William of Orange, came and took her in hand. This tradition is kept alive in France as a precious legacy in the teaching of history, of literature. Very often a source of great moral strength, it does, however, sometimes constitute, I shall not say a danger, but a hindrance to clear-sightedness. Were I asked what I consider to be the main defect of an edifice I know well, the Quai d'Orsay (the Ministry for Foreign Affairs), I might be tempted to say that it lies in the fact that precedents are never forgotten there, that one expects to find a copy of the Treaty of Westphalia at hand in every drawer.

Now, that real France was not to be humored, restrained, assuaged with friendly words, until the day she should wake up smiling and perceive that all was well with the world. To imagine that was to misjudge her. It has, all the same, been real France which has slowly examined the new situation that has come about in Europe, and—not because she was lectured to, but in spite of it—she has

realized that, precisely in order to serve her historical aims, she must change her methods.

That is why we first saw Poincaré go to the Ruhr to defend the rights of France to reparations. It was a mistake, but a mistake perhaps inevitable with a nation whose economy is based on thrift and inheritance, whose mind is set more on keeping than on making (which, by the way, is what makes France so implacable on the question of debts).

At the end of 1922, when the idea of the occupation of the Ruhr began to gain ground in France, if Poincaré finally adopted it, it was—this is a firm conviction of mine, and I was there at the time—because he felt, rightly or wrongly, that the prestige of France required him to do something. In this dangerous period, nothing forced his hand so much as the bickering hostility which was being shown against him in England by the Lloyd George-Curzon team. True, and here lies perhaps Poincaré's gravest mistake, a lull had come in England with the too short-lived Cabinet of Bonar Law who came to Paris in January, 1923, for an Inter-Allied Conference, during which he offered France and Italy the broadest and most generous compromise on the war debts that had so far been formulated. Bonar Law had come with the most loyal and friendly intentions; but he was already a dying man and failed to make his language understood; a moderating Italian influence was also lacking, for Signor Mussolini, through demagogical ignorance more than through ill-will, helped Poincaré to reject Bonar Law's offer, and the painful misunderstanding grew more and more bitter. Poincaré felt himself obliged to choose between a dangerous step forward and a humiliating retreat seemingly imposed on him by England.

Being a Frenchman, he chose, at the last moment and with tragical internal hesitation, the dangerous step. It was

Poincaré in the garden of his family house, at Champigny, Lorraine

the Ruhr; nothing else was possible. But the man who did it was certainly not, at the bottom of his heart, the Poincaré-la-Ruhr, the warlike Poincaré full of hatred. In reality, his Ruhr policy had been prompted at least as much by his desire to create a new situation in the Franco-British relations as by a wish to evolve a means of pressure upon Germany.

But it is the same Poincaré who, in 1929, by an heroic effort which, for that matter, he paid for with a long illness, decided a restive Parliament to accept, for the American debts and for a final settlement with Germany, solutions which still went against the grain of the blind nationalism of old. Poincaré made up his mind about this quite spontaneously; he might perhaps not have done so, if a Lloyd George had again been forcing him all the time to do it.

Poincaré is not only the personification of the French national traditions; to anybody having a certain intimacy with the spirit of the old French provinces, Poincaré—powerful personality that he is—seems to embody one of the typical characteristics of mental France, I mean her juridical mind.

One must, however, beware of generalizations when it is a question of men like Raymond Poincaré; so easy, and then again so difficult, does it alternately seem to speak of him. Certainly, more than once in our conversations, I had been irritated by the cold inexorability of his logical French mind. But a logical mind, French or not, has certainties. And I always ended by feeling, and I still feel, that Raymond Poincaré has all the certainties, just as the noblest of French spirits, Blaise Pascal, had his own—with those tragic pangs of doubt and faltering that only an heroic stoicism knows how to hide in the recesses of a tormented soul.

## XX

### Millerand

ALEXANDER MILLERAND has occupied every kind of post in French public life: Cabinet minister, prime minister, president of the Republic.

It is, at present, the fashion to slander the public servants of democracies; yet, Millerand is not the only French statesman of the present period who has made his way without ever stooping to court the favors of the new sovereign: the fickle popular will. If sycophancy, low flattery, sacrifice of personal dignity, were necessary roads to electoral success, Millerand would never have been anything in his France.

I know that Millerand's enemies can point to the fact that he was a Socialist in the days when it paid to be Socialist; and that he became Conservative when a reawakening of patriotic manifestations averred itself in France.

In reality, in the political thought of this man, there are fewer contradictions than one might think. Slow, for that matter, thoughtful, wilful, an orator of forcible clearness but devoid of emotional power, if he has turned, he has done it with a deliberateness that is exactly the opposite of a turncoat's style.

When, at the end of the last century, Millerand was one of the leaders of Socialism in France, he could say—and I heard him say it myself, though he rarely speaks about himself—that one might then think mainly of social reforms because the world lived in peace and because one could do it without running the risk of external dangers. And at

this point, Millerand likes to add, now that he is hated by the Socialists, that there is not one social reform voted in France at the beginning of this century that did not have him as author.

But one must also add this, which is far more convincing: that, during the most combative period of his Socialist campaigns there always was, in Millerand's speeches and in his action, a stern note, put there to remind forgetful comrades that the country remains the supreme duty. As early as 1893, at the end of a Socialist banquet, he declared:

"It is for all Socialists a binding duty to accept, however much they may dislike it, whatever their personal feelings, the double load of general conscription and of the heavy war budget."

It is in his famous speech of Saint Mandé, on May 30, 1896, that he declared: "Never did we entertain the mad and impious idea of breaking, of casting away from us, that incomparable weapon of material and moral progress, chiseled by the ages, the French fatherland."

They were unusual words to speak at Socialist meetings; the powerful and noble Jaurès certainly thought them too—but I am afraid that he did not say them.

Even in his most extreme manifestations as Socialist among excited mobs, one finds in Millerand's words an accent of social defense, almost a warning such as an enlightened Conservative might have uttered. When, in 1886, Millerand, the lawyer, pleaded for Souquières, the murderer of a foreman whom Souquières and his comrades had thrown out of a window to be torn to pieces, he went so far as to say: "The perpetrator of this deed is not Souquières, but poverty"; and, to sway the jurymen of Rouergue, he added: "The end of this century is big with events. If we are to avert the terrible disaster which is brewing, we must guard against returning verdicts dictated by vengeance or

anger." Of course, the timid souls who read such words in some *Le Figaro* of the time, probably thought that this man Millerand was a revolutionary ogre. As for myself, I feel in them more or less the same tone of conservative prevention that I have heard so often from Prime Minister Millerand in friendly conversations.

In 1902, he had already been Cabinet minister, but he still belonged to the Socialist Party, when he said, in one of his speeches: "If our ideal may never be out of our thoughts, we must yet, and before all else, guarantee the security of the house that shelters with the ideal of to-morrow the reality of to-day."

One must admit that the words of this Socialist were strangely like those that the President of the Republic was to pronounce twenty years later.

If Millerand owes the whole of his career to his will-power, he nevertheless had one piece of good fortune: when he became Cabinet minister for the first time in 1899, he did so with Waldeck-Rousseau.

It is very rare, in politics, that one should learn anything from another man; politics are but experience, and their essentials we all learn by ourselves. But I am convinced that the young Minister Millerand, come straight to power in 1899 from the most extreme benches of the Socialist Party, underwent deeply, if not the imprint, at least the attraction, of a man like Waldeck-Rousseau, his prime minister.

Waldeck-Rousseau, bearing a frigid mask that badly hid, for any one who could see, the deep emotions of his rich soul, a wonderful orator but one who almost always refused to use the contrivances of art, was one of those marvels of intellectual lucidity such as one finds only in France. Waldeck-Rousseau acted on two principles, or rather on two conceptions of political and personal dignity

Millerand sipping coffee in a garden, with Sforza on his right and Jaspar and Lloyd George on his left

which he had set up as maxims: "It is enough to be in the right; the hour always strikes when people acknowledge it"; and "The things that the people forgive least are the mistakes they are allowed to make."

Millerand, a minister under forty, could not but undergo his influence. A few months after his entry into the Waldeck-Rousseau "Ministry of Republican Defense," began that famous world fair, the Exposition of 1900. Having recently entered the diplomatic service, I was attaché to the Paris Embassy; I then came to know Millerand only to the extent of shaking hands with him at social parties; but I well remember the numerous dinner-parties and routs that followed one another incessantly during that festive year and at which the dear duchesses and marchionesses of our neighborhood of the Faubourg St. Germain used to ask Countess Tornielli (the Italian Ambassadress) and ourselves: "And how is that monster Millerand who comes to dine at your Embassy?" They finally met the monster, who, except for his white hair, was then as now, short, thick-set, supposedly proud because he was silent,—whereas he was probably merely shy, like his chief, Waldeck-Rousseau.

Twenty years later, I saw him as colleague in many post-war Inter-Allied Supreme Councils, particularly at the lengthy Spa Conference; and again, afterward, when I went to France as ambassador it was to him who had become president of the Republic that I presented my credentials. My speech then, which was discussed afterward and, in French nationalistic circles, criticized, ventured to insist twice on "the necessity for a common work for the moral and economic peace of Europe." I say ventured because such words were not in fashion in official France of 1922. I added that "true peace could only be found in a forthcoming general entente of the whole of western Europe."

Millerand assured me in his answer—which, according to the protocol, he read as I had read mine—that he shared all my views with regard "to entente and peace in the world."

To answer "world" when I had said "Europe" seemed a courteous way, not of denying, but of evading the problem.

But if the words I heard were tepid enough, the clear remembrance I had of Millerand's way of understanding the Franco-German problem, such as I had witnessed at Spa, was far more vivifying. And facts mean more than words.

Undoubtedly, in Spa, there were no amenities or *tonnelles de Thoiry*[1] as, later on, between Briand and Stresemann; after all, it was only eighteen months since the end of the war. And for that matter, manifestations will never be Millerand's way. But, beneath his ruggedness, how often did I not see him rejoice sincerely whenever a question had been settled in full agreement with the German delegation. They knew, at Spa, that I had expressed categorical opposition to any formula that might entail French or Entente adventures into the Ruhr, and Millerand—harried as he was by an artificially excited political opinion—never tried the slightest pressure on me to make me change my opinion; one would have said that he was glad to be able to show that even a loyal friend entertained very serious misgivings about the decisions which they wanted to pass off in France as an infallible panacea. When, after some hesitation, we signed at Spa on July 16, 1920, an agreement about the coal-deliveries (Millerand for France, Lloyd George for Great Britain, myself for Italy, Fehrenbach and Simons for Germany) Millerand put forth to me

[1]The phrase, *tonnelles de Thoiry,* has entered the French political slang. Thoiry is a little place not far from Geneva where Briand and Stresemann had one of their first confidential meetings, in a garden, under a pergola *(tonnelle).*

one argument only in favor of the agreement which declared that if by the fifteenth of November the German deliveries had not reached six million tons "the Allies might occupy the Ruhr."

"Fehrenbach, Simons and their colleagues are honest men," said he to me, "but their Cabinet is weak; that threat will be a source of strength in their hands, against the Stinnes."

And I feel sure that, like myself, he meant that, and not an atom more.

Of course, the attitude taken by Millerand in the French Senate when he entered it after he had resigned the presidency of the Republic, would seem to show that he has eyes only for the material and armed defense of France, and that he is deaf to more generous and more sanguine opinions. Did he not, in 1929, declare in the Senate that the French troops must stay in the Rhineland up to the last minute allowed by the treaties, so that France might have time, behind this rampart, to build the famous artificial concrete defenses on the eastern frontier?

I shall simply venture to remark that there are sometimes, on the political stage, and even among the men intellectually most honest, repertoire exigencies. When a certain part is definitely assumed by one of the leading actors, the other is tempted to assume an antithetical one; not out of bad faith, but knowing that the course of history would certainly help him one day to work in a different manner; not that he would therefore repudiate his former opinions which would, even then, have served to point out dangers, to balance situations. For that matter, and without applying this to Millerand, who could swear, for instance, that Caillaux, that great bourgeois, would not have tried to be a Poincaré—if only Poincaré had not been there already?

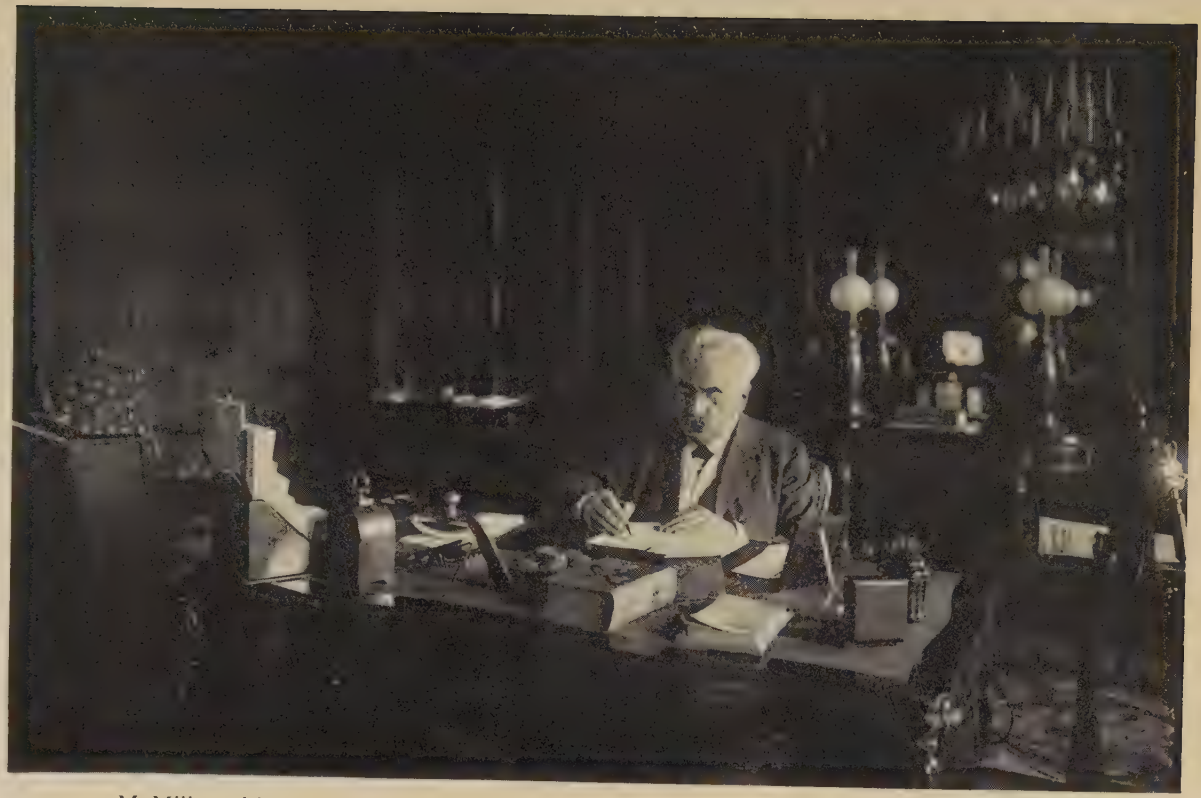
Millerand's real personality must not be sought in his attitudes of accidental tactics. It must be sought for in those that indicate essential ideas, which, indeed, explain why he is not beloved of the Nationalists of the French Right.

To begin with, he belongs to that set of men who were deeply impressed by the *Affaire Dreyfus*—like Poincaré, Painlevé, Herriot and so many others—and who grasped its profound meaning. Shall I dare to add that, young man that I was, placed as I was where everything was known, the Italian Embassy—it is to my having witnessed the *Affaire* that I owe perhaps the major part of my mode of interpretation of the moral struggles still going on in contemporary history?

Like myself, and with, to boot, direct political responsibilities, Millerand saw Maurice Barrès repudiate his *Homme Libre,* find himself the "soul of a partizan" and declare that there is a French justice that is not to be mistaken for simply justice. He heard Father Didon, the famous Jesuit preacher of the day, celebrate in a prize-day speech—about which the whole of France passionately took sides—"material force that does not reason but imposes itself," and add: "the enemy is intellectualism that professes to despise force, civilianism that pretends to overrule the military."

Those words—which to-day constitute the official gospel of Fascist Italy—at that time seemed blasphemous. The result of the determination of "civilianism" to have a crime committed by the military redressed—the condemnation of an innocent man, Dreyfus—they went far beyond the struggle of the moment. By those words the enemies of modern liberty, thinking themselves very near victory, had thrown off the mask and revealed their secret thoughts.

The Waldeck-Rousseau Ministry was the democratic kernel that withstood the danger and saved freedom-loving



M. Millerand in his private study at the Palais de l'Elysée, when President of the French Republic

France; Millerand belonged to it: those are events one does not forget. And, indeed, on the principle of the lay school he never compromised, not even during recent electoral campaigns when the chances of political combinations had placed the Clericals near him.

Another fundamental idea which has always remained rooted in his mind—and which his stay in Alsace in 1919 has developed still more—is that of decentralization. Having arrived at Strasbourg, after the war, as high commissioner for Alsace and Lorraine, he did not hesitate to declare openly that "France has much to learn in the redeemed provinces that should furnish the French with a political and administrative system to be copied by the whole of France."

When president of the Republic, at the Elysée, he more than once expounded his ideas to me; ideas that interested me all the more since I am a convinced partizan of them for my own country. As usual, in his practical way, he conceived of the thing as a series of transitional reforms, without in any way beginning with a destruction of the *départements* of Napoleonic memory.

The first result of decentralization—he used to say—will be, precisely, to entrust to regional councils the representation of the interests of regions constituted not from a political standpoint, but from the administrative and economic point of view of the departments. The departments once grouped in virtue of affinity of origin and of economic interests, their regional councils will have to study and settle the questions peculiar to the region. The parliamentary work will be lightened and, a thing no less important, the task of the central administrations. We shall no longer see all business, without exception, from the slightest to the most important, be sent up to Paris, go through the ministerial offices, and inevitably tarry there because the days, even for bureaucrats, have only twenty-four hours and because the

task is, at the present time, beyond the strength of any administrative body. Those reforms, Millerand added, can, from to-morrow, be undertaken, studied, decided. Schemes, indeed, are not lacking. Even before the war of 1870, Jules Ferry at the Congress of Nancy advocated decentralization. Let us make up our minds to choose and carry out the reform. It is time, he would end, but it is high time.

After he had resigned from the presidency, to Millerand were quoted the words of an Alsatian who had said: "We know better what we need than do the people of Provence and Gascony; and just as we do not make it our business to advise the Bretons and the Parisians as to what concerns their local affairs, in the same way we do not want them to conduct our personal business."

People around Millerand judged the words as "dangerous," so much has the fatal centralization bequeathed to them by Bonaparte become a sort of second nature for many Frenchmen. But Millerand replied calmly:

"No, quite true. And what is true of Alsace is not true for Alsace only. Let us all learn from Alsace and Lorraine."

A man who desires the resurrection of the old French provinces which still keep, each and every one, beneath the ruthless equalization of Bonaparte, a characteristic life and aspect, from their turn of mind to their cooking, that man may artificially, and even a little through his own fault, be labeled as nationalist and militarist. He is, he can only be, essentially a man of peace. Even more: a man of happy and trustful devotion to the atmosphere he loves, who does not cast too many envious looks abroad.

Millerand's foreign policy can be summed up in one word: security. A regionalist is like a gardener: gardeners only feel themselves at home among their orchards and flowerbeds, shut in by hedges. Hedges are never threatening,—even if they are built in concrete.

## XXI

### Briand

I WAS once discussing with Aristide Briand some irritating by-laws that the French Administration had devised against the Italian farmers who had begun buying lands on a large scale in the old province of Gascony. They seemed to me so unnecessarily nationalistic, those rules, considering especially how distant Gascony is from the Italian Alps.

"Of course, of course," agreed Briand. "Our officials are always so timorous. . . . It is like Joan of Arc. Why did she waste so much energy in *bouter dehors* the English. In a few generations we should have assimilated all of them; and what a splendid race we might have made."

All Briand is there: pride in France, but not nationalistic, selfish pride; rather the serene certainty that French traditions, French psychology, French moral force, will, like old Athens and like older China, always end by absorbing immigrants and invaders.

A patriotism as intense, so deep and so serene that its aggressive side disappears, I have never met but once elsewhere, at the other end of the world, during a conversation I held on a Japanese beach, at Kamakura, with the famous exile Kang Yu-wei. He had finally come to the conclusion, after his vain effort to save it, in 1898, that the Manchu dynasty was in decay and doomed to disappearance.

"I hope"—I repeat his very words—"that these little Nippons are going to conquer my China and will set up the Japanese Emperor in the Imperial Palace in Peking. He will officiate in the temple of Heaven; for a time it will look

sad, almost sacrilegious. In two or three generations, his sons and all his Japanese will become Chinese; and we"—in saying this he swept around his arms as if to take possession of the landscape—"we shall be masters of these very islands."

Were these the words of a traitor, or of an exalted patriot?

Briand does not go so far; or he does so only in jest. But patriotism, or a certain form of patriotism, has a distressing way, in this nationalistic world of ours, of becoming as intolerant as a religious creed; and one understands that to many orthodox Frenchmen Briand's patriotism may seem heretical, and consequently hateful.

Leaving aside other episodes to which our passions alone give a semblance of importance, such as the renewal of diplomatic intercourse with the Vatican, Briand will be remembered as the man who, during the war, tried to solve its problems on other fields than those of Flanders and of Italy; for the Salonika expedition is indeed Briand's contribution to the history of the war, just as, after the war, Locarno was Briand's contribution to peace.

To have identified oneself with initiatives that have altered the course of the history of a people is enough to have thwarted greeds and passions, and—worse still—the selfish aims which hide under the guise of noble phrases.

One explanation of the differences of appreciation—so deep among Frenchmen—as to Briand's personality and aims, can be found in what has always seemed to me a characteristic of the French.

France is intellectual, logical, literary. France dislikes, above all, intellectual disorder, and even the appearance of intellectual disorder. When, in the eighteenth century, a French playwright translated some of Shakespeare's comedies for the *Théâtre Français,* he took care to advertise

on the posters that the plays had been "corrected and improved according to French taste." But he did not correct enough. When Othello, in the last act, cried: "The handkerchief," pointing to what he believed to be the proof of Desdemona's infidelity, the whole audience burst into a fit of laughter. To speak of such a vulgar thing as a handkerchief in the tragic style! The following day, the critics gravely pointed out that the translator ought to have said "veil" or some such other genteel word.

Now Briand has no literary mind, no logical mind. Briand is a dreamer, rather a lazy dreamer, who looks only into the future, and cares little for immediate logical contingencies.

Little as I believe in the so-called "racial" characteristics, I can not but see the deep reason for this *forma mentis* of his in the fact that Briand comes from Brittany. He is a Celt, just as, on the opposite side of the Channel, David Lloyd George is,—Lloyd George who has with Briand some points in common, hidden by the fact that the French statesman is a lazy man with no personal craving for power, which can not be said exactly of the British Liberal leader.

Brittany, if I am not mistaken, never gave a leader to France, which has almost always found the leaders in talkative Provence or in sedate and steady Flanders and Lorraine. But was it not of Brittany that one of her greatest sons, Ernest Renan, was speaking when he said: "Without Celtic blood, all poetry would disappear out of a nation"?

One other quality Briand possibly owes more to his Celtic origin than to the lucid reasoning power of the French, so absolutely sure of themselves when they can base their arguments on written words. It is a sort of instinct—which a long practise of diplomatic negotiations has sharpened and disciplined in him—that makes him feel exactly where a foreign government will stand firm, and where it

might make concessions. I should even say that it is in cases such as these that Briand has struck me as a perfect artist—when, alone among his own, he felt certain of a method, although "texts" seemed to condemn his "thoughtlessness," his "rashness."

What follows, he himself told me, and I verified the story afterward in a conversation I had with Asquith once, during the latter's last journey to Italy. It seems to me to illustrate very well this seeming rashness of Briand's, which is nothing but a style based on an instinct to which he is plucky enough to trust himself.

His great war idea, the expedition to Salonika, had been decided upon. France and England had agreed to send an equal number of army divisions. An Inter-Allied Conference was to meet at Calais to settle the details.

"And suddenly, at Calais," so Briand was telling me, his everlasting cigarette-end in his mouth, "Asquith got up and said, in a way as solemn as it was embarrassed, that his British Majesty's Government had reconsidered the question and had decided that it was better not to try the Oriental 'diversion.' I looked long at Asquith and at the other Englishmen, and an idea came into my mind; but I only said:

" 'All right; do not let us talk any more about it.'

" 'What do you mean?' asked Asquith, amazed.

" 'I mean that, if we are confronted with a well-considered decision of our British Allies, I have no more to say about the matter.'

" 'But four French army divisions are now on their way to Salonika?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'But they are going to certain disaster. We know from the Greek Government that you may rest assured they will not be torpedoed if they are given the order to return to Marseilles and Toulon.'

" 'That is why, Monsieur Asquith, they will land; for those promises prove that it is their landing that is feared.'

"Asquith interrupted the sitting; he had a short private meeting with his own colleagues; and half an hour later came back and declared:

" 'We have decided to send to Salonika as many divisions as you will.' "

And Briand added: "I had felt that from the first."

Anatole France wrote once that the force of the reactionaries in France was that they could always rely on the men of the Left to carry out their policy.

Briand, who comes from the ranks of men who were, in their young days, extreme Labor agitators, seems to all appearances to come under the sharp formula of the French ironist, as far as home policy is concerned. The first time he came into power he broke a big railway strike with a violence unknown till then to men of more moderate origins. But that is the everlasting story everywhere; and after all it is not there, in police regulations, that the ideal of a statesman is to be found. What was new in Briand was that he always remained faithful to an ideal of peace:—*"apaisement,"* appeasement, as he said in the very first speech of his first Cabinet—peace, appeasement, among the different classes of his compatriots—peace, appeasement, among the nations.

If there is a day in his life when Briand has felt that he really has contributed something worth while and sacred to the history of his country and of Europe, a day he is really proud of, it certainly is the one upon which he succeeded, at Locarno, in laying the foundations of a peace by common consent between France and Germany, as substitute—at least up to a certain point—for the Treaty of Versailles which, by the deepest psychological error of 1919, had been framed without any free discussion with one of the contracting parties.

After the Versailles Treaty, and in spite of the rather artificial atmosphere of elation reigning at the time in France, he never concealed the fact that he disliked the form peace had taken. "I know you do not like my peace," thus sneered Clemenceau, still prime minister, at him, one afternoon when he met his predecessor in a corridor of the French Chamber.

"Quite true, my dear friend," answered Briand suavely, in his detached style. "I do not like your peace very much; it looks really like you. It has got a daring hat on one side, it carries a big stick and it twirls with it. Just like you, your peace, my dear friend."

But has not Briand also some practical skill? Political life is a hard taskmistress; and it is difficult for one to succeed in becoming prime minister half a dozen times only on the strength of love of peace.

In my opinion, the essential cause of Briand's success is his skill in compromising, so rare in a logical mind like the French mind. He sees at once, in a political crisis, not the argument for division, but the reasons for agreement; and putting no pride in appearances, he is always ready to come to an adversary and offer him concessions—a minimum of concessions of course. Meanwhile he has taken the *premier pas,* and by this simple act has created an atmosphere of conciliation.

When he has nothing to offer, he finds all the same a trick to disarm hate. In 1926, before the Poincaré-Briand Cabinet, he had been entrusted by the President of the Republic with the formation of a Cabinet of his own. He was, at the time, especially disliked by the Socialist Party. In their irritation, the Socialist members of Parliament had again revived their old grudges against a "traitor" to their party, against a "turncoat." But Briand was obliged to take them into account. And he consented to go to their rooms

where, assembled, they were keeping an icy reception in store for him.

Briand saw at once, with his quickness of perception, how the situation stood.

"Yes, I know," he said, sitting down in his nonchalant way, "I am a traitor, I am a turncoat. Yes. And now, gentlemen, can we not speak of our common present interests and preoccupations?"

The Frenchman is not yet born who can resist an unforeseen piece of wit. Everybody laughed, and to quote textually the words I heard from a French parliamentary leader who had been present at the meeting and mimicked the scene to me, they "liked him more than before."

Briand himself gave, in one of his first speeches from the government bench, this definition of his policy: *"Je suis un homme de réalisation,"*—I am a man of realizations.

The words might have seemed more than natural, simply obvious, to an Anglo-Saxon audience. A great novelty it was in the French Chamber. In the French Parliament, ideas and ideology have a much greater importance than in the British Chambers, not to speak of the Italian which exist no more. Even when material interests are at stake, they have to be dressed up, at the Palais Bourbon, with intellectual formulæ, coming down, according to taste, either from the revolutionary declarations of the *Droits de l'Homme,* or from traditions of Royalist France. In England politicians are fond of their own opinions, but for the sake of superior interests, it is admitted that they may compromise with their ideas. When this is done in France, it is blamed as a most terrible shame.

That is why Briand's mind, all agility, seemed such a novelty—almost a scandal.

Another—in far less essential fields—of Briand's characteristics is his so-called laziness. The last time we dined

together at the Italian Embassy in Paris, Briand feigned to resent deeply the charge that, as usual, some one of the party had humorously brought against him.

"I lazy, I who work all day? When I stroll about in the streets of Paris or along the *quais* of the Seine, I reflect upon the moods of my countrymen; when I take long holidays and week-ends at my Cocherel, unconsciously come out of my memories the real meaning of the course of events; indeed, the time I throw away with least profit is when I read a book, or a diplomatic dispatch."

I said at the beginning that Briand had a great pride in France, but not in a pugnacious, Louis XIV France, in a hegemonic France in the style of the diplomatic and military formulæ. French, he wants a French hegemony; only he seeks it in the initiative of ideas and plans which will remain—so he thinks even when he imagines he is being solely European—French plans.

Never has there been a better concrete illustration of his thought, his method and his tactics, than in the speech he made in July, 1929, in the French Chamber, at the end of the long and painful debates on the war debts to America.

The bitterness of the discussions had emphasized a trend toward dangerous and sulky isolation of France.

And Briand concluded his long speech, which had been entirely concerned with the question of the debts to America, with this, as antithesis and remedy:

"But peace will not come only of an agreement on reparations and debts, of the evacuation of the Rhineland. It will come of a more general understanding between the nations of Europe.

"For some years, I have personally started, among a certain number of my colleagues, representatives of European countries at the League of Nations, a propaganda for the organization of Europe. I have won a great number of adherents, and yet again, quite recently, most important encouragements. . . .

Briand (snapshot taken at Geneva during the Assembly of the League of Nations of September, 1929)

"Quite naturally, critics have come down upon my undertaking; quite naturally, I have been upbraided as a bad Frenchman. . . .

"I have often heard reproaches of the kind, but they have never stopped my doing. I do indeed consider the organization of Europe as a necessity, an organization of Europe, not against other countries, not against any other country or group of countries, but in order to ensure the best management of the immediate conditions of peace, in order to end a state of anarchy that will leave room for conflicts as long as Europe will lack a sufficiently coherent organization of the vital relations between its peoples.

"It is in this spirit that a certain number of statesmen and myself in agreement with my government, will seek the means for a European organization which will be a new warrant of peace."

Read, this is lengthy and diffuse, as everything is that comes from a born orator like Briand. But it was, nevertheless, the first announcement of a great idea, which he tried to bring into a beginning of realization at the Assembly of the League of Nations a few weeks later (September, 1929).

"The United States of Europe!" shouted Briand's sentimental admirers, in a semi-religious ecstasy of emotion.

"The United States of Europe!" sneered, with a shrug of the shoulders, the *real-politikers,* whom, by a strange legerdemain, the defeat of Hohenzollern Germany has conjured up again in France.

Both are wrong.

At Geneva, as on other occasions, Briand got hold of an idea born abroad to use it on behalf of France.[1] Idealism in the service of realism.

After all, it is precisely for that reason—I almost said, only for that reason—that Briand, with all his shortcomings, is a statesman, and not a politician.

[1]It was Count Coudenhove who started, years before Briand, from Vienna, the idea of *Paneuropa.*

## XXII

### Giolitti

WHEN Giolitti died, in July, 1928, in his eighty-sixth year, having been prime minister of Italy five times, and during a quarter of a century at least the unchallenged leader of the Democratic Party, the greatest number of political writers in Europe and in America thought they were showing a deep knowledge of things Italian by admitting that, yes, the old man had remarkable qualities but that, after all, he was simply the highest type of wire-pulling politician who prospers in the parliamentary group-systems. The puritan ones added that his strength sprang from his corruptive cynicism; the kindest that he was a faithful servant of the State, but no more than a wise and sober-minded politician. True, indeed, that even in his lifetime and in the long days of his power, he seemed to all his contemporaries, and even to many among his Giolittian friends, much more an administrator than a statesman. After his death, the tendency is increasing to make it an axiom that all his best achievements are to be found in the realm of administration rather than of statesmanship; and that he was in his element when he played at balancing parties in Parliament or consolidating a fiscal policy.

Believing as I do that Giolitti has been much more than that, I must admit that he tried his best, all his life long, to encourage the legend. His contempt for cheap applause that in his lifetime won him rare and faithful devotions but hampered him in his work as a statesman, goes on harming him in his death. One would almost think that history also

wants to be deceived. With Giolitti, laconic coldness was the way of reacting against what, rightly or wrongly, is sometimes pointed out as an Italian defect: an excess of external manifestations of feelings. Living in a country where one is sometimes tempted to pride oneself too much on an incomparably glorious past, or at least to show too much pride in it, Giolitti, through a mixture of pride beyond the average and of natural reserve, went possibly to the other extreme. His fame and his popularity suffered from it; but what makes his moral greatness is—that he knew it, and did not care.

That trait, the essential one of Giolitti, the man, was of the kind which does away with anecdotes and picturesqueness—at any rate for those who want external picturesqueness. In 1901, in a speech on the strikes, he quoted a verse from the *Divine Comedy;* Parliament was so unaccustomed to a Giolitti with literary flourishes that the whole House began to whisper and smile. Said he: "I am sorry, I'll never do it again." Twenty years later, being together in the same Cabinet, I showed him a message I had been asked for by an English newspaper; I had quoted from memory a verse from Dante; Giolitti took his pen and changed one word I had misquoted. I said, laughing: "What would the House say?" "Oh, it's pure luck; this one, and the one I quoted in that old speech, are the only two verses of Dante's that I know by heart."

I went out with his son, Federico, as cold, as ironical, as laconic as his father: "Yes, my father still knows the whole of the *Divine Comedy* by heart." But he said it as if he had let slip one of those family weaknesses that one hides from strangers.

Giolitti's ambition—for he was ambitious—came from his need of action; he felt himself to be a man of action as others know themselves to be painters, and of political ac-

tion, of all the most complex, for it deals with that erratic and incalculable material, a human community; that is why he strove to be, and was, for so many years at the head of his country; but there was no vulgar strain in his ambition; still less any vanity. When I came to know him, late in his lifetime, but very intimately, he was not even interested in what would be said of him one day; books about himself were brought to him; he never glanced at them. And that not because he was now an old man; old men, on the contrary, are usually eager for words proving that the forgetfulness of death is not yet upon them.

Giolitti's external and apparently colorless life has helped on the legend of a cold bureaucratic soul. Born in 1842, he was seventeen when Garibaldi was calling youth to arms against Austria; but the young Giolitti went on calmly with his university studies till he graduated in law in 1861. Having a few years later become an official in the Ministry of Justice first, and then in that of Finance, he must have felt then, under his impassive appearance, the grandeur of that task of national unification which his little Piedmont, his old Monarchy, had undertaken,—that Monarchy which his father, his grandfather, had loyally served in modest functions. To him, to serve in this work of Italian unification, was an adventure as dramatic as to become a Red Shirt. He worked for years; he studied; he learned Italy.

In 1882, thanks to his extraordinary gift for figures, he was made a councilor of State by Depretis. A councilor of State was one of the rare officials who, in democratic Italy, were allowed to enter Parliament. He was, in the same year, elected a deputy by his fellow-mountaineers of the Cuneo province, who faithfully sent him back to Parliament for forty-five years. In 1889 he became minister of finance in the Crispi Cabinet; and in 1892, prime minister for the first time, with the portfolio of the Interior. His

eloquence was always unimpassioned, wilfully stripped of all the lyrical outbursts or rhetorical expatiations that a long tradition is pleased to call oratory.

Once, the radical leader, Cavallotti, complained that the Prime Minister's answers were too short. And Giolitti replied (I quote verbatim from the minutes of the House): "The fault rests with nature, Mr. Cavallotti; I unfortunately find it impossible, in spite of all my efforts, to make a long speech. There must be something missing in me; but the fact remains that I can not go on speaking when I have finished saying what I had to say."

To such irony one could only retort with an accusation of bureaucratic barrenness.

Another accusation which has become axiomatic about him is that of empiricism. Undoubtedly, he was empirical; but his manner was not too distant from a deep knowledge of history.

I myself, after I became his colleague as minister for foreign affairs, have heard him a hundred times at Cabinet meetings repeat a sentence which he used especially when colleagues smitten with ideology would develop hypotheses or hazy plans: "I only bandage my head when it is broken."

Irritation, this, with him, at useless talk. But to those to whom—a very rare privilege—he had granted a certain degree of intimacy, he would explain his idea better, an idea that, with the brevity of the metaphor of the broken head, had probably shocked the most learned among our colleagues.

One day, during one of our long walks along the Via Appia, as I went on making hypotheses on the possible course of certain incidents, Giolitti answered:

"Yes, you are right, but you are young. And my long years have taught me that even if your hypotheses—or any hypothesis—become a reality, there always is, in the way

they become a reality, a number of differences which suffice, even when they are very slight, to change the whole outlook and to impose new decisions of which no one had thought before. If you have thought too much about your action, you risk becoming the prisoner of an old idea."

He meant to explain by this, indirectly—for his pride or his indifference forbade him to indulge in the easy game of all politicians: skilfully to justify their contradictions—that his contradictions had ever obeyed that law.

The whole of Italy, even the remnants of the Conservative Party which fought him so bitterly, now admits that Giolitti's policy at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first thirteen years of the present one, brought to the country an unparalleled period of economic prosperity and of peace. Yet, if one reads the Conservative papers of the time, one would believe that strike succeeded strike, everything threatened ruin. As ever, Giolitti's policy then was very simple. Convinced that the economic status of workmen and peasants must be raised, he gave full freedom for striking since the strikes, for all the troubles they entailed, obliged the owners to better their means of production, and this led to a general increase of wealth in Italy. As Giolitti declared in Parliament in 1911: "The results have proved that my system, semi-revolutionary in appearance, was the only one really conservative."

It is on a few fundamental ideas like this one—and in foreign policy, peace—that Giolitti never altered his mind. They were, after all, the essential ideas. About minor problems, he changed more often than apologists might care to record.

But the chapters of Giolitti's action that are still, and will be for long, discussed are the part he played in the entrance of Italy into the war, and his last Ministry in 1920-21.

After the war, on October 12, 1919, he outlined in a speech to his faithful Dronero constituents his reasons for his neutrality policy in 1915 and his whole policy for the future. He pointed out how, by his strong attitude when Austria-Hungary proposed to him to attack Serbia in 1913, he had prevented the war, and how, at the beginning of the World War, he had written to the Foreign Minister, San Giuliano: "Austria's provocation of the conflagration is truly brutal, showing either complete ignorance or else a deliberate desire to begin a European war. I may be wrong, but my impression is that Austria, more than any other country, will bear the costs."

The quotation—which he had never condescended to make when he was attacked as a pro-German during the war—proved to all that he had been, not a pro-German, but a friend of peace.

In the same speech he explained his opposition to Italy's entrance into the war by the fact that, with the Treaty of London negotiated by Sonnino, England promised Italy facilities for raising loans which would fall short of Italy's expenses by fifty millions sterling a month. He believed the war would be a long one, and he accused the makers of the Treaty of London of having dragged Italy into a war for which she was unprepared, and in which her reasons for neutrality were the same as those of the United States, who only entered the arena much later and therefore suffered much less.

In June, 1920, at the fall of the Nitti Cabinet, Giolitti came into power again. His name was submitted to the Crown at the unanimous request of the country. It was a dangerous moment, for a moral crisis was grafting itself on the economic one, the fatal outcome of our long years of war. It is always dangerous for a country when the two crises are contemporaneous.

It was only natural that Italy should have come out of the war more shaken than the other victors. The sufferings had been so intense, the promises of a coming millennium had been so imprudently lavished upon the millions of soldiers, it was not surprising that a wave of discontent and rancor rose among them. The only result of Sonnino's short-sighted policy at the Paris peace negotiations[1] had been the spreading, among a nation exhausted by the sufferings of the war, of the impression that half a million Italians had died in vain, and that victory had been "mutilated."

Revolutionary propaganda profited by this opportunity to flaunt before the eyes of a dissatisfied and irritated people the example of Russia—a myth and an ideal. To the Italian ex-service men, mostly peasants, who had been led to expect that after the war each would be given a piece of land as his own, this meant, not Communism, but simply that the real workers, the men who actually fought the war, were now apparently the masters in Russia, and that the great estates of the idle proprietors had been divided among the descendants of those who, only three generations ago, were serfs.

The blind policy of building a wall around Russia did the rest. Men said to themselves: "Ah-ha! Russia is being quarantined like a plague center." Therefore not a single story of Bolshevik horrors was any longer believed.

However, that the discontent was more superficial and neuropathic than really grounded, was amply proved by the general satisfaction manifested at the return of old Giolitti, of Giolitti who had never entertained any illusions about the war.

To meet the economic situation, Giolitti at once drew up a program of heavy taxation for the rich and of light taxation for the poor. He thus reaped a double advantage: financial, because he hastened the advent of a healthy budget

[1]See chapter on Sonnino.

(when Fascism came in, Italian finances were once more perfectly sound, thanks to Giolitti's drastic measures). The moral advantage was obvious: the poor, who were being preached a Soviet gospel, saw that the rich, for once, were being hard hit.

As for the foreign policy, he discussed it with me. He had—despite the gravity of the moment—kept back the formation of his Cabinet two days, to give me time to come back from London where I had gone for an exchange of views with Lloyd George on the question of the Inter-Allied debts.

On my return to Rome, we met at once. Without mentioning the formation of his Cabinet, he began by asking my opinion on the Fiume question and on the whole Adriatic problem. I answered him that the Fiume question, while it contained worthy elements of patriotic feelings was, in the hands of D'Annunzio, but a pretext for him to try the conquest of Italy as a new esthetic sensation. "It is therefore up to you," I said, "as coming minister for the interior to see to it. On the other hand," I added, "I do not agree with any of the so-called cautious and so-called practical men who all think that, cost what might, we must heal the gaping wound of the Adriatic question [Tittoni had been ready to accept a frontier line only eight kilometers beyond Trieste; Scialoia, to share Istria]; it is not a policy of liquidation we must pursue, but one of reconstruction; we must impose on Belgrade our amplest and most complete geographic frontier line; we must not, on the other hand, by insisting on a portion of Dalmatia forge ourselves the chain that will deprive us of all diplomatic freedom for the future, for the whole policy of a great country like Italy will be bound by the safeguarding of a Dalmatian possession on the other side of the Adriatic; but chiefly, we must make Belgrade understand that all danger of a Habsburg restoration has not yet van-

ished; that, if this restoration would mean a lessening of the value of Italian victory, it would also mean the destruction of Yugo-Slav unity; and that Italy might give the Successor States of Austria-Hungary her support, as a Great Power, with this result that, in practise, we should become the leading power in Central and Oriental Europe." I added the reasons which made me feel certain that England and France would eye such a policy without misgivings, provided we explained our views to London and Paris with frankness and dignity.

Giolitti was silent for a time and then said: "I own that I have never been so optimistic; but in any case, your scheme is worth trying. Will you be the new minister for foreign affairs? The list of the members of the new Cabinet has been ready for two days; but I waited for your return to offer you this portfolio if we agreed."

I objected:

"Parliament is very restive. I am a poor orator. Do you not think you would be better advised in finding some one who has more of the knack to please the House?"

And Giolitti, in true Giolittian style, replied:

"I have frequently watched you in the House. You have something to say; you say it; then you sit down. For me, that is eloquence."

I accepted. A few days later, I left for the Spa Conference where I received the Yugo-Slav Foreign Minister and put down the principles, and began to create the atmosphere, out of which, five months later, came the Treaty of Rapallo.

When the whole of Europe had convinced itself that the natural, or at least excusable, disorders due to post-war unrest had been but a transient crisis and that, under Giolitti's deft management, the life of the country had recovered its normal tempo, I summoned the Yugo-Slav plenipotentiaries to Rapallo to settle, at last, the Adriatic question.

They arrived on the morrow of a nation-wide ceremony which had proved that the country as a whole, from the Alps to Sicily, was recovering from the post-war neurosis. On November fourth, the banners of the regiments especially mentioned for valor in battle had been brought to Rome where the King was to pin medals to them. Both in Rome and in the towns and cities whence the deputations had started, and whither they presently began to return bearing their decorated banners, the enthusiasm and reverence shown by the people to those symbols of heroism and of suffering were overwhelming.

It was a good omen for the beginning of our diplomatic negotiations; but as I was not absolutely certain the Yugo-Slavs would give in to all my demands (I knew that the great Council of the Crown held in Belgrade before the departure of the plenipotentiaries had vetoed some of them), I had asked Giolitti to remain in Rome, although he was, with War Minister Bonomi and myself, plenipotentiary for the treaty. As soon as success seemed certain, I was to wire to him to come.

The Yugo-Slavs resisted my demands for a long time; they found it hard to cede half a million Slavs, although—as I said to them—it was no fault of ours if these were on our side of the Alps. The discussion, one night, reached a degree of dramatic tension quite uncommon in conversations of the kind; I reproached them with not bringing to the accomplishment of their civic duty the same courage they had had during the war. "You know," I told them, "that the settlement I submit to you, with the diplomatic Entente I am offering, is good for you; but you are afraid of the jingoes in Zagreb and in Belgrade; you are afraid for your popularity. And I? Do I not know that I risk mine? I tell you this only: When you will go back to Belgrade, you will feel the sting of remorse."

Turning on my heel, I abruptly left them. Seeing my interlocutors deeply moved, I knew they had grasped the sincerity of my words, and that they would not shirk their duty as I was not shirking mine.

Only they still clung to Zara, this essentially Italian town of Dalmatia which I was determined to annex to Italy, in spite of the fact that from almost all Italian quarters I was advised to compromise. For instance, Signor Mussolini whom I had received at length at the Foreign Office before my departure for Rapallo, had suggested "Zara independent with Italian diplomatic representation." Bonomi, naturally, backed my action. Finally, the Yugo-Slav Premier, Vesnich, asked me to wire to Giolitti and submit to him the Yugo-Slav reasons for opposing the annexation to Italy. Giolitti answered that we should not break off the negotiations on account of Zara. But his telegram arrived when the Yugo-Slavs were making up their minds to give in. Therefore I did what I had a right to do and what I considered my duty: I told the Yugo-Slavs that Giolitti in his answer completely supported my views. Beside my love for Zara—a jewel of Italian art—I was also urged by the certainty that the Italo-Slav relations, which I consider essential for the political and economic expansion of Italy, might have suffered, should a young and ardent people like the Yugo-Slavs have taken it into their mind, in a fit of nationalistic fever, to dis-Italianize Zara.

After I had won over Zara, Giolitti came to Rapallo and thanked me for having corrected—he said with a smile—the obscurities of his telegram. On November twelfth, the Treaty of Rapallo was signed; it gave to Italy an Alpine frontier line more perfect than any under the Roman Empire, the whole of Istria, the islands of Lussin and Cherso, Zara, privileges for the Italians of Dalmatia, and independence to Fiume, recognized as a free Italian

town contiguous with the Italian boundaries (that is to say, Italian in practise, but with the autonomy traditional in its long history, which was better for its economic life than formal annexation). Morally the Treaty constituted the first peace freely consented to since the war; and consequently the source of an atmosphere of fruitful concord.

Twelve days later, in Parliament, during the debates on the Treaty, answering Signor Federzoni who maintained that I might have asked for more, I declared: "Was it wise to create a Chinese wall of hatred where we want free and pacified outlets toward the East? Signor Federzoni says that, had we estimated the international situation better, we should have asked for more. No; we knew the situation perfectly; but had it been a hundred times more favorable to us, I should have considered that I betrayed the future fate and destiny of Italy by asking more. And you know well, Signor Federzoni, that such has always been my thought. As to Fiume, the prosperity of which is not impaired by any clause, we detain the means of ensuring its fortune."

The last sentence contained an allusion: a rumor which was beginning to be circulated for fear that the general satisfaction of the country with the Treaty of Rapallo might entirely bereave the Nationalists of the Adriatic pretext for demagogical agitations; namely, that, at Rapallo, a secret clause had given the Yugo-Slavs the small port of Baross, facing Sussak, which the Fiume people wanted to annex to the independent State. With his usual clearness, Giolitti alludes to this episode in his *Memoirs:* "They played especially," he writes, "on the question of Port-Baross. Now, I had had to acknowledge that Port-Baross was outside the *Corpus Separatum* of Fiume; and it was in this traditional *Corpus Separatum* that we found the diplomatic and historical support for our theory of an independent town.

Port-Baross effectively belonged to the Croats who used it for their wood-trade. I had issued statements to this effect to the Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs. All that, indeed, constituted mere digressions."

Indeed, the very thorough research I had made in the Archives at Budapest had proved that Port-Baross belonged to Croatia and not to Fiume's *Corpus Separatum;* we might thus easily have recognized it as Yugo-Slav in the Treaty, granted especially—as Signor Mussolini himself remarked when he came to power, not understanding the moral reasons which had prompted us—the readiness with which public opinion accepted our settlement. In truth, considering the violent tension to which the Yugo-Slav plenipotentiaries had been subjected, Giolitti, Bonomi and I had deemed it necessary to embody at once into a treaty what we had gained, and not to linger in long technical discussions about the concrete realization of an idea I had had in mind from the beginning. This idea was the creation of a joint Italo-Fiuman-Yugo-Slav Consortium for the port of Fiume, once the city of Fiume had been acknowledged independent and Italian. It would have been Fiume's salvation since Yugo-Slavia would have been interested in the port. Ports like Trieste and Fiume can not prosper unless they entertain the closest relations with their hinterland. To oblige Yugo-Slavia to accept the idea of the Consortium for the port, we refused to admit in the treaty that Port-Baross was Yugo-Slav; but declared in a letter to the Yugo-Slav Foreign Minister that we admitted that the small port must belong to Yugo-Slavia. It would have been the contribution of that State to the Consortium to be created later on.

When the artificial outcry began for Port-Baross, it would have been extremely easy for me to rise and say: "If you do not like our conception, you are free to do what you like; our letter is simply an engagement of the present Cabi-

Giolitti with Sforza

net; so much so that it is neither ratified, nor registered in Geneva; and it is therefore devoid of any international value; a new Cabinet is free to think the opposite of what we do; only we shall lose the Consortium (the idea of, and formula for which, had already been accepted by the new Yugo-Slav Prime Minister Pachich) and Fiume will go to ruin."

At this point, I saw that, with Giolitti, loyalty to his country went hand in hand with extreme delicacy of feeling toward a colleague. For one day when the campaign against me was raging, ostensibly about Port-Baross of which everybody spoke without so much as knowing what it was, I told Giolitti how easy it would be to explain to my opponents that they merely had to come to power and would in no way find themselves bound about Port-Baross; they would then realize that they must either renounce their demagogy and save Fiume, or stick to their talk and destroy the commerce of Fiume.

Giolitti only answered: "Yes, they attack you because they know that you remain silent; they'll try some day to follow our policy and will make the world believe that they are forced to that because of engagements of ours which they will pretend to have been binding for them."

But he went no further; he wanted to leave me free to cut the campaign short if I wished it. I did not—and had the pleasure later of seeing governments which, like Fascism, boast of their strength every day, shelter behind engagements of mine—that never existed. Only they carried out our policy so badly and took such a long time about it that poor Fiume is to-day a dead city.

I said before that, when Giolitti came to power, the fascination of the Russian unknown was turning into a sort of legend. I, for my part, quickly realized the danger and tried to dispel it. A few days after our coming to power, I

said, in my first speech in Parliament as foreign minister: "Monsieur Clemenceau's blind policy of the barbed wire around Russia has been morally useful to the Soviets as it has furnished them with an alibi for the tremendous sufferings of the Russians. Bolshevism must live and die of itself, without pressure from abroad." A little later I contributed to the cause of social conservation something that looked very modest, but proved worth many speeches: I facilitated a mission of Italian Socialists to Russia. These Socialist delegates were honest men and when they came back after a few months, were believed by our working men when they reported that Russia was an inferno.

But meanwhile in September, 1920, the external manifestations of feverish unrest by the Italian proletariat had reached their culminating point. Using as a pretext the lockout resorted to by some leaders of industry as a result of an ordinary economic controversy, the workers proceeded to occupy the factories, in accordance with the Russian revolutionary formula. The movement lasted a few days and then died a natural death. It died from non-resistance. Giolitti refused to leave his summer residence at Bardonecchia in the Alps. From there he directed the work of the government. At one time he received a deputation of industrial leaders, one of whom, more insistent than the others, asked the Premier to bombard the workers in the factories which they had occupied. Giolitti replied, with his courteous, ironic smile: "Would you be willing for me to begin the bombardment with your own factory?" The man declined.

A few days later the occupation of factories began to peter out. The workmen tried in vain to entice the engineers and managers. These declined the invitation. The workmen felt that they were helpless, the old Italian common sense did the rest, and liberty triumphed, noiselessly, over violence.

Giolitti faithfully describes this episode, and the reasons which dictated his conduct, in the following passage of his *Memoirs:*

"I had, from the beginning, the clear and definite conviction that experience would teach the workmen that their aims could not possibly be reached. This episode was to me, under different shapes and conditions, an experience analogous to that of the general strike of 1904, which had aroused so much terror and then revealed its inanity. I was firmly convinced that the conduct of the government must be the same now as then. I therefore allowed the experiment to go on up to a certain point, in order to convince the workmen of the impossibility of their reaching their goal, and that the ringleaders might not throw back on others the responsibility for the failure."

Giolitti certainly did not want my advice at the time. But the legend of the Bolshevik experiment of 1920 having, in certain circles, become the strongest reason for their admiration for the Fascist régime, I may state what my impressions were at the very beginning of the occupation of the factories. I was with the other ministers in Rome; we met and declared our complete solidarity with Giolitti in what he would decide. But I felt it a duty to write to him:

"Strange as it may seem, may I write to you as foreign minister about what happens around you in Piedmont. It is generally believed that the Empire in Russia fell in 1917; it is an error; the death-hour of the Romanovs was struck in 1905 when the streets of St. Petersburg were stained with the blood of the workmen, shed by soldiers launched against the strikers. If we do the same here, we'll create a legend and a religion. We'll look like Conservatives, and we'll be the destroyers of the Italian Liberal Monarchy. I feel sure that you agree with me; for my part, I could not take the responsibility for any other policy."

Giolitti's silence proved to me that he was viewing the

situation in the same light as I did; as also, I may add, our colleague for education, Benedetto Croce, did. Croce's views on the events were always to me a thrilling intellectual pleasure, so harmoniously did he blend, in his outlook, the serenity of the philosopher with the practical wisdom of the administrator.

At the time of the occupation of the factories the Italian Socialist movement seemed at the height of success. More than two thousand communes were in the hands of the Socialists, supported by excited and ignorant mobs. In the Chamber of Deputies, their group counted one hundred fifty-six out of a total number of five hundred eight representatives.

But the failure, and even more than the failure, the ridicule incurred by the abortive occupation, undermined all faith in the extremist leaders. Ranks and numbers remained, but confidence and enthusiasm were gone. This confidence would undoubtedly have persisted if the traditional "rivers of blood" had been shed. Finally, in January, 1921, at one of its periodical congresses, the Socialist Party divided into two groups, bitterly hostile to each other. That meant the end of all peril from that quarter.

This was what Giolitti was waiting for, what he was counting on. I remember his saying so several times in the autumn of 1920. And this certainty was one of the reasons for his inactivity at the time of the invasion of factories. It was his conviction that, however divided the Italian Socialists might be, they would instantly reunite if violence were used against the workers. As it was, by his temporizing policy he induced many of the moderate leaders to contend persistently and successfully, though in secret, against the illusions that had prompted the more violent and childish to seize the factories.

Of course, timid spirits were still afraid; fear is a bad

factor by which to judge serenely the signs of moral changes. I remember, for instance, dear Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador who had been in Petrograd during the war and the revolution; having seen the outburst of Bolshevism in Russia he was scenting traces of it more or less everywhere. One day I came to see Giolitti while Buchanan was calling. I jokingly denounced his apprehensions to Giolitti who, looking out of a window, said: "Do you see that olive tree, Sir George? You have never seen one in Russia, have you? Well, you will no more see Bolshevism in Italy than olive trees in Russia." It seems that Sir George repeated those words in London, and many months later they were proffered to me by Lloyd George, then prime minister of Great Britain, as an indisputable truth.

Throughout 1921 the morale of the Italian masses, as well as their economic condition, improved steadily. In 1920 there had been 1,881 strikes in the country; in 1921, the number fell to 1,045, with 720,000 strikers—very nearly the same figure as in 1915, the year of Italy's entry into the war. In short, there was the same curve of progress as there was in France and England, where the same epidemic of strikes had been prevalent.

It was at this time that Fascism, born as a revolutionary movement, had put itself more or less openly at the service of the employers to destroy the workers' unions. Giolitti welcomed it as a counterpoise to Socialism. But he was firmly convinced that the movement could easily be sobered into legality by Parliament. This is one of the reasons that decided him for a general election in 1921. When I warned him that, possibly, out of a danger passed and over, our industrialists might shape a new one with unknown issues, Giolitti found me pessimistic and used to answer: "Those Fascist candidatures are mere bonfires; they will make a lot of noise but will leave nothing behind them."

That is possibly because Giolitti, who had an unerring eye for the men who lived around him—one of the reasons for his love of Parliament—did not perhaps see quite so clearly movements that developed out of his ken. Had Sturzo been a deputy instead of a priest behind the scenes, Giolitti would probably have had the same regard for him that I had, and would more easily have gone on with him.

When Fascism came into power, and I had at once resigned my Embassy to France, Giolitti wrote to me at great length in Paris. After telling me that he had known I would resign, he tried, however, to persuade me from taking an attitude of downright opposition. His idea of "sobering Fascism into legality" was coming up again.

Giolitti was a great liberal statesman of the nineteenth century; he firmly believed that all factions and all interests would find their compromise in Parliament. Indeed, he only broke openly with Fascism when it practically suppressed the right to vote.

This rooted belief of his suffices to dispose of the legend that he was, or wanted to be, a dictator. If he was, he was in the sense that he succeeded in synthesizing in himself the consent of the majorities. Great and honest servant of the State that he was, he did not believe overmuch in the absolute importance of programs, not from cynicism or skepticism, but because he was suspicious of general ideas, vast and solemn. He considered that politics were not pedagogics. But he never concealed his opinion, never hid it behind pompous words—and by that he knew that he was raising the level of Italian political life.

## XXIII

### Bissolati

IF, AFTER Giolitti, I wish to evoke the memory of Bissolati, it is not only because I have liked the man as few others, but it is because Giolitti and Bissolati picture fairly well the two sides of an ideal medal representing the double profile of Italian character. The two types reappear constantly throughout our history: the one is the man of realistic thought strictly linked to a true observation of life; like Machiavelli, the first thinker of modern Italy—Dante's genius belongs to the Middle Ages—like Cavour, like Giolitti. Bissolati is, on the other hand, the type of saint which recurs and repeats itself, from Saint Francis of Assisi to Filippo Neri, to Mazzini, to Mameli, to Garibaldi.

He belonged to that group of middle-class intellectuals who had, in the 'nineties, introduced Socialism in Italy and had become the leaders of the new party. Others, like Antonio Labriola, may have possessed a deeper knowledge of the economic tenets of Socialism. But Bissolati alone had this gift: that as soon as one came near him, it seemed natural to be a Socialist, or to wish to be one. He was to the Socialist organization what a saint is to the Church: the saint leads toward it; and as soon as one has entered it, one is surprised to find so few saints.

With Bissolati, Turati, Labriola, the pick of Italian youth was, in those years, drawn toward Socialism. The ideals of the Risorgimento which had enthralled three generations of Italians could no longer be a live force in Italian public life, since Italy was made and free. The Church her-

self had felt that there was something in the movement of the day. The famous encyclical *Rerum Novarum* that Leo XIII published in 1901 had even prompted many Catholics to found a social Catholic Workers' Party.

But from Marxism spring two orders of ideas. The one incites minds like Bissolati's to a religious desire for work toward the liberation of proletarians. The other—with its emphasis on a concept of force and dictatorship, which Marx formulated as a means to an end of social and moral rejuvenation—could not but drive turbulent spirits to take as ends *per se* the dangerous weapons of which Marx, with his apocalyptical Jewish mind, had not clearly enough shown that he admitted of them only as instruments for an ultimate ideal of fraternity and peace. Mazzini was the first to show his apprehension of this turbid and dangerous side of Marx's new gospel. Bissolati, who recalls Mazzini in so many ways, learned it by painful experience in 1912, when he was thrown out of the Socialist Party by a young journalist named Mussolini who, at the annual Congress of the Party at Reggio, caused and obtained the expulsion of the moderate Socialists.

Bissolati had never, in either mind or action, dissociated the struggle for the lessening and gradual elimination of social inequalities from the most loyal love for the fatherland. In 1908, after the Austrian *coup* in Bosnia-Herzegovina, he had been among the first to denounce the dangers for peace that might arise from the Habsburg policy of violence in the Balkans; in 1911 he had approved of the conquest of Tripolitania by Italy, declaring that a colonial policy was not incompatible with a régime of extreme democracy.

But, at the Reggio Congress,—all Socialist congresses had, in Europe, come to resemble more and more the old Eastern Councils where two opposite parties discussed for

months about the *filioque*,—it would have been difficult to carry out a summary execution of Bissolati and his moderate friends if one started discussing ideas. It needed a fact—one of those facts with which a demagogue can rouse an assembly. A little while earlier, a madman having fired on the King and missed him, the deputies had suggested going in a body from the Chamber to the Quirinal, to congratulate Victor Emmanuel. Bissolati went with his colleagues; he had considered he might, since he repudiated all violence and since a king was concerned who had, on his accession to the throne in 1900, proclaimed that he would devote himself "to the defense of Liberty."

Mussolini who, the year before, during the war of Tripolitania, had organized demonstrations against the sending of troops, declared to the Congress that "outrages are the professional risks of kings, as falls from scaffoldings are those of masons, and that Bissolati's gesture could only be interpreted as a recognition of monarchy, and thus as a sin against Socialist thought."

A maddened crowd threw Bissolati out of the Party. Mussolini's time had come. The choice between the two men was one between two distinctly different orders of ideas and feelings. Mussolini there showed up as the demagogue who would terrify the middle classes and lead the proletarians to victory through violence. The masses believed in him; henceforth there was no room left among them for a man of Bissolati's moral and intellectual refinement.

I knew Bissolati only during the World War; he had, from the beginning, favored the entrance of Italy into the war "in order that our country may be a working instrument by which this international crisis will engender the new world which we see dawning," as he wrote on August 2, 1914, to our common friend, Bonomi. When Italy entered the war, he volunteered at fifty-eight and went through the real war

with the Alpine troops; wounded twice, he yet stuck to his post.

Deeply respected by all Italians, he was wanted in a concentration Cabinet during the war; he accepted the offer as a painful duty, grieved to have to leave the trenches in the eternal snows of the Alps.

Faithful to the conceptions of which Wilson had become the spokesman, he wanted an entente, both during the war and after, with the Slav nationalities then fighting to free themselves from Germano-Magyar hegemony. He failed to convince the Foreign Minister Sonnino,[1] and finding that to remain in the Cabinet would have meant supporting a policy he considered prejudicial to Italy and to Europe, he resigned.

The war over, he wished to outline to the Italians his conceptions of a fair peace. He decided to speak to the people of Milan on January 11, 1919, at the Scala. His speech, which he wrote out entirely, began by stating that the League of Nations, destined to "close the era of international anarchy and to open that of human right," would be warped from the beginning if the nations did not conclude fair peace treaties. After he had described at length on what bases peace should be made with the Yugo-Slavs in order that the treaty might be just and at the same time useful to Italy, he declared that thus "our country would, in Europe, be in the vanguard of the Wilsonian movement."

The speech was read later, but could not be made in the Scala. A tumult, as violent as it was artificial, prevented Bissolati from making himself heard—and he had to retire.

He had conceived of his speech as the continuation of what he used to say to the soldiers in the trenches when he encouraged them to fight and die for an ideal of peace—"that our sons may not see this." But the men who had fol-

[1]See chapter on Sonnino.

Bissolati, out of his trench on the Montenero on the Alps, June, 1915

lowed and shared his thought had either died on the battlefield, or were scattered in the towns and fields of Italy—and very many of the latter were probably in the throes of that transitory fit of disgust which I have mentioned in the preceding chapter. In their stead were the new waves of adolescents who had barely tasted of the war, who had not so much as suspected the dreams for the liberation of mankind that Bissolati had woven over it. The newcomers only saw in the war, some, military and imperialistic glory, others, a chance to seize hold of power and of the joys of life, and to thrust aside those whose moralizing language they did not even understand.

At the head of this riffraff, half of which was sincere, and the other half shady, there was the same Mussolini who had, in 1912, succeeded in ousting Bissolati; only, this time, for the opposite reasons or pretexts.

The Italian Socialist Party, which, with Turati, had never quite overcome its suspicion of the war, gladly saw the defeat of the old friend. In the ignominious manner in which Bissolati was treated, Italian Socialism refused to see anything but another proof of the truth of their conception of the war which they defined as "a conflict between capitalistic interests." Behold, they said, the end of Bissolati who had seen something else in it.

In reality, it was Bissolati who, with his idea of a fair peace, of the freedom of the peoples, had adhered to the highest traditions of the old Socialism.

By remaining deaf to the whole trend of those ideas, the Socialist Party only drifted even further from the feelings of the country. Whereas it went on repeating Marxian formulæ—like a religious community muttering its prayers—its hold on reality weakened. When, in the face of the Fascists who had managed to hide their greed under cover of idealistic programs, the strength of a Socialist

Party would have been so essentially helpful to the moral equilibrium of the country, it was found that there was little to back it.

Bissolati died on May 6, 1920. Six months later, with the Treaty of Rapallo, I finally succeeded in making that fair peace with the Yugo-Slavs which I had so often discussed with my dying friend.

Bissolati's former political friends, the Socialists, rejoiced at it. Their spokesman, Treves, in the course of the parliamentary debate preceding the vote, declared: "It is the first treaty since the war which, in a certain sense, renounces war, because it actually proves that even very serious territorial problems are solvable and susceptible of free agreements."

But when the time to vote came, bound by their formulæ, by their previous attitude toward Bissolati, they did not have the courage to vote in favor of the Treaty, and so abstained.

The Socialist Party, however much it could boast of morally respectable leaders, some of fair intellectual value, was no longer up to its task; for, confined within lifeless theories, it went on ignoring the value of human idealism which Bissolati represented with his Franciscan purity, and which they had already allowed to be trampled on in 1912 by Comrade Mussolini.

## XXIV

### Albert and Elisabeth of Belgium

IN SPITE of what statesmen and learned professors may think, public opinion at large is still convinced that kings have a remarkable influence on the affairs of their country. Twelve years after the Versailles Treaty, the mass of the British still point to Kaiser William as to the villain of the piece in the great tragedy of the war, while the Germans do the same for King Edward. Truth to tell, this kind of national unanimity would tend to prove that kings ascend—or descend—to the mere value of collective symbols, thus losing all personality.

In reality, this much may be advanced without fear of courtierly exaggeration: that the advice of a judicious constitutional king may be invaluable to a Cabinet minister. But the thing has not been so common since the species of constitutional kings has existed. In England, birthland of parliaments, "dear Queen Victoria" probably wasted thousands of hours of her ministers' time by her attempts to get back a power that had slipped her hold. She only capitulated late in life, when her dispositions were at last broken by old age and by Gladstone's inexorable sermons. What I heard more than once from Lord Asquith and from some British ambassadors makes me believe that the diplomatic gifts of the son, Edward VII, have been rather overrated. King Edward was simply a Tory; his redeeming point being that he was a skeptical (or timid) Tory; he favored alternately all the schemes destined to fail, just as he opposed by turns all ideas destined to success, from

women's suffrage to the Hague Peace Conference. Had he had his word to say in the days of Lincoln, he would probably, like all the fashionable English people of the time, have been in favor of the Southern States against the North. Even his action for the Triple Entente was less happy than is generally believed, or was at least mingled with rashness. At the time of his first visit to Paris, his letters prove that he was only concerned with social success, or at any rate, that he did not weigh the consequences that might eventually result from an excess of noise. For that matter, always, even when the central idea of his "policy" answered perfectly to the needs of the country and to the views of its statesmen, he dressed it up in too many foreign tours, too many Wiesbadens. . . . All this became, in spite of himself, a cause of unrest in Europe. And it is not even certain that French statesmen were always sincerely enchanted with the music he played. The Triple Entente would probably have been stronger had it been less theatrical. With his genuine modesty, coupled with great tact in dealing with men, and his ability to recognize good advice, King George, his son, has probably served his country at least as efficiently—although future text-books will probably devote to him pages far shorter and more tepid than to his father.

How is it that the three Coburg Princes who have succeeded one another on the throne of Belgium from 1830 until the present day, have shown so much more political sagacity than most of their kind? One really would be tempted to believe that the extreme psychological difficulties they had to contend with, sharpened their qualities. The Belgians over whom Leopold of Coburg came to reign, after the 1830 Revolution which made them independent of Holland, had learned, throughout the ages, only to mistrust their princes. The Constitution which Liberals and Catholics framed in those days is stamped with three essential con-

Queen Elisabeth of Belgium on the steps of the Pisa Cathedral

cerns: that of the Catholic Party, with its sanction of the most solemn guarantees for the freedom of religion and of education; that of the Liberal Party, with its sanction of the amplest freedom of the press and of the right of association; that of the two parties combined, to prevent the king and his government from ever becoming dangerous. For this essentially individualistic people, king and government were not much more than an inevitable inconvenience.

In this atmosphere, the two predecessors of Albert cleverly managed to make their way: Leopold I even more so than Leopold II, whose haughty spirit would have been more at ease in the building of some Oriental empire—and perhaps even more at the head of one of those new realms, with neither flag nor stamps, constituted by some gigantic monopoly or trust.

After the overawing personality of the founder of the Belgian Congo, public opinion was long satisfied to grant Albert, his nephew and successor, the usual qualities of courtesy, of industry, of culture, so easily attributed to a sovereign. This perfunctory judgment would probably have stayed with him until his State Funeral, had not a terrible crisis opened the eyes of his countrymen—and of Europe. The war showed the world this rare thing: a hero sincerely surprised and shocked by applause, so honestly does he believe that it would be impossible for anybody to act differently. And this was what won him the hearts of the Belgians.

The war, the stand on the Yser, the simple dignity with which the King and the Queen settled on the last parcel of free Belgian soil, wove around them a legend that was based on fact. There were more children christened Albert and Elisabeth in occupied Belgium in a month than there had been in the five peaceful years preceding the war.

It is in the conception and management of the battle of

the Yser, in October, 1914, that King Albert's character appears most clearly—all the more so that there, along that little stream, surrounded by his small army, it is he, and he alone, without ministers, without Parliament, who must assume the responsibilities which will decide whether the last piece of Belgian territory will remain free or be swallowed up by the invading army. King, but head of only a small army, surrounded by the chiefs of far more powerful armies, Sir John French with his Englishmen, Foch with his French, he imposes himself only by the cold force of reason. To Foch, an admirable chief who, when he speaks to the Allies, is sometimes tempted to believe they always need encouragement, to Foch who urges him to launch an offensive battle, the King proves that the local situation and the general interest of the Allied Armies require a defensive battle. He sticks to his plan, and, attacked by German forces infinitely superior to the anticipation of the Allied General Headquarters, he succeeds in holding out without losing his hold on the coast—that would have been the inevitable result of an offensive battle,—thus sparing the Allies the creation of a free German corridor along the sea which would probably have been fatal to them.

During those days, when the existence of the Belgian Army was daily threatened, the King was in all the trenches bracing every one, calmly telling the generals that if they gave in he would have to dismiss them, allowing any officer who gave in to be replaced by an energetic soldier: a practical and reasoned heroism contrasting sharply with the theory of advance-at-any-cost to which Joffre's General Staff sacrificed so many precious French lives during the first weeks of the war. The battle of the Yser was worth the heavy sacrifices it cost the Belgians, but all because the King alone persisted in wanting it defensive, behind a strong natural line of defense, the Yser, with the left flank

of the army covered by the sea—that is by the British Navy—in case of a retreat which the King tried to avoid by all the means in his power, but which might have happened nevertheless. Armies made up of free citizens understand these conceptions better than one would think, and it was this unobtrusive firmness, this courageous prudence, that won to King Albert the affectionate confidence of his soldiers.

Winston Churchill, back from Antwerp, whither he had gone to play the Napoleon, did not know how to define King Albert: "so curiously cool and detached," he said, "one doesn't know whether he has understood at all, or whether . . ." And there Churchill's literary talent stopped, unwilling to own a suspicion that this man, with his drawling way, had grasped things more quickly than the most brilliant of Englishmen.

King Albert has discovered this truth: that kings must not be brilliant. William II, whom he knew so well, was brilliant; brilliant in a way was his relative, Edward VII. King Albert has always been on his guard against this sort of success.

When, after the retreat of the Germans, he returned to Brussels, he was welcomed with an enthusiasm unique in the annals of Belgian growlery. Aside from the joy of deliverance, the situation was difficult in Belgium as everywhere else. How often was he not urged then to emphasize his "royal authority"—which in practise would simply have meant the support of certain interests against other interests.

Then, once more, this man had to decide alone—as, alone, once before, he had done on the Yser—to make those decisions on which depended the fate of his army.

But King Albert, who may make mistakes,—he has made some, and, for that matter, does not pretend to infallibility,—gives one the impression that he is safe from

errors sinning against the soul of Belgium. This great-grandson of German princes knows what German obsequiousness before the king is worth; just as he knows the worth of the enthusiasm for a crowned head on the other side, in France, and how long it lasts. True Belgian, he is satisfied with the respectful but independent bow of the Belgian who takes off his hat to him in the street, thinking, "He is a good fellow."

Possibly, with a pride which simplicity does not preclude, but refines, he is not altogether displeased with the fact that so few people have realized the extremely interesting complexity of his nature. It is as if, beside this slack, awkward man, with his persistent youthfulness, and that bored look he wears during ceremonies which once made an American friend of mine remark, "He reminds me of Colonel Lindbergh," there was another personality in no way contradicting the former, but completing it: the collective Coburg type, ironical, knowing the value of men's words, especially of those who proclaim themselves "loyal servants" simply in order to be themselves served by the monarchical institution. This double personality is not so rare in kings; but what is unique and so attractive with Albert is that the irony,—which he hides so carefully but which sometimes breaks out nevertheless, if only in a smile,—the deep experience of human weakness, the sense of reality that instantly makes him see through the most deceiving formulæ, have in no way killed in him his simplicity, his moral honesty, his will to accomplish his duty simply because he stoically knows it to be his duty.

If it is true that marriage reciprocally influences two beings, the personality of Queen Elisabeth is a living document of King Albert's superior moral worth.

Every one knows with what heroic simplicity she shared with King Albert the sorrows and sufferings of invaded

Belgium, from 1914 till 1918. Grand as it is, the episode reveals but one side of this attractive personality. It is alone worth while to note that never, nowadays, does she speak, either of the bombardments of La Panne or of the thousands of hours spent in nursing the wounded in hospitals, or of the risks and dangers she ran. Nor do I, for that matter, mean to imply that she is alone of her cast to have this reserve. I have known others as simple and as modest—an attitude all the more strikingly set off by that of certain relatives of theirs, who will for ever be talking of "my trenches," "my war companions." For in this cast as in the others there are the "gentlemen" and the "cads"—the cads being those who speak all the time of "my house," "my blood," et cetera. Elisabeth is really so royal, so very simply royal, that she never thinks she is.

Artistically gifted,—she is musical, she paints, and she feels poetry very deeply,—one would be tempted to trace these gifts to her descent from the House of Wittelsbach, the members of which have, for generations, been such devoted patrons of art. But the explanation does not explain the personality of Queen Elisabeth; far from it. What is admirable in her is that, keenly perceptive as she is of beauty, she has nothing of the morbid Wittelsbach estheticism that characterized her unfortunate aunt, the Empress Elisabeth of Austria. Elisabeth of Austria made a refuge for herself at the Achilleion in Corfu, and she dreamed exquisite dreams there. But she deserted the heavy duties her station in life entailed; the Hofburg in Vienna seemed a prison to her. The new Elisabeth of Bavaria,—she was named after her imperial aunt,—on the contrary, unites with an exquisitely artistic nature, not only an honest forbearance for her royal task, but also a healthy simple joy in fulfilling it, every time she feels she can do good or be useful—which means every hour of her day.

One name gives the key to this happy balance between the two sides—so different—of the same medal: her father. It would seem that she feels it instinctively, so deep is her reverence for his memory.

Duke Charles Theodore of Bavaria had married in 1865 a Princess of Saxony who died at twenty-one. He remained a widower for seven years, then married Princess Marie-Josepha of Bragança. After this marriage, at thirty-five, he left the army and began a new life. At the age when all his equals are, even now, generals and field-marshals, he felt a sort of shame in having a rank he had not earned, and became a student of medicine at the university. His professors—among them the famous Virchow—were not always amiable toward him. These were still the old free Germans of 1848; the long years of materialistic achievements of the Bismarckian period had not yet reduced them to the rank of courtiers, such as William II found so plentifully around him, to his undoing; and those unsophisticated scientists were mistrustful of this dynastic hobby, the first of its kind; they did not believe, at first, in the seriousness of the royal student's purpose.

But the student worked so hard that he ended by winning their respect—a new form of respect—and a medical degree.

Now he wanted to be a real doctor. But that would have been impossible in Munich; so he settled in a country place, at Tegernsee. He specialized first in obstetrical cases; Bavarian mothers were flattered that their sons were received at their entry into the world by a Prince of the Royal House. But the Duke only found his way when he specialized in oculist work; he opened a clinic in Meran, at the time in Austria, although an Italian place, and later on, in Munich. I have it from famous old German scientists that he really became an authority on the matter, in spite of the drawback of being a prince.

The present Queen of the Belgians, barely adolescent, frequently helped him in his clinic; there it was she learned to understand and know life.

But this father also had the artistic gifts of all the Wittelsbachs. Sometimes he would play the piano and improvise for hours on end—the only times he would seemingly risk forgetting his science and his clinic; semblance only, for from this secret life he really drew strength and inspiration for his scientific work. The young girl who helped him in the clinic was the same who, lying on the carpet, utterly forgetful of all else, silently and ecstatically listened to him during the long hours in which he poured his soul out in his music. This explains the Queen of the Belgians, so serenely brave in facing all her duties, and so rich with an inner artistic life.

She has made new duties for herself: her father's daughter, she did not fear to take a step that, strange to say, caused scandal. She founded the League for the Prevention of Venereal Diseases and she is still president of it. Once, when some one congratulated her on the courage she had shown in taking this initiative, she answered: "Indeed not; it was just the hypocritical silence reigning on this scourge that showed me my duty. My duty was to lead the way when other women hesitated because of conventions and prejudices. Since I could, I must."

Neither sulky nor tired, but happy to have accomplished her whole duty gaily—duty done joylessly is mere bad work—the Queen sometimes gives way, for hours on end, to the everlastingly young and slim Elisabeth of Coburg, who, in a secluded and private wing of the castle of Laeken seeks, like her father, not a diversion, but a new inspiration and strength in music. With her it is not usually the piano but the violin, a far deeper, more secret and more rending means of expression for an ardent soul. But with

the violin one only looks into the depths of oneself; and, a few years ago, Elisabeth discovered that she had eyes with which to see the external manifestations of life. I have not often seen any one probe so searchingly as she does into the mystery—and often the horror—that a human face hides. She tried painting, and succeeded. She paints now, almost always human faces, faces of men and women in the ripe period of their life. A strange gallery it is, frequently with evident technical faults, but always with, described on each face, the deepest psychological traits that one makes even from oneself: Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. But the manner is not purposely cruel; or it is only cruel as everything true is cruel. Her technique as a painter reminds one of some early German master: just a touch of external *gaucherie;* a certain gray monotony of color, but with something so genuine, so seen-through. Some of her models seem sometimes as if they had forced her to paint as Hogarth drew. But one quickly realizes that there is no trace here of the caricatural overloading of Hogarth; if we feel the Hogarth touch, it is simply because of the models, as she sees them around her.

Her reading is paradoxically varied; her literary appreciation quick and original. But I have never felt that she has an author she prefers as a guide.

When a certain man whom I ought to know rather intimately, was telling her one afternoon that in some sad inactive days he used to feel that he could stand only Pascal's company, she gave him a puzzled look.

"How can a soul find a complete mirror in another soul?" she said. "Each of us is such a world, and . . ."

But she dislikes so strongly to speak of her deepest self that she interrupted at once the course of her thought, and after a few silent moments she simply pointed to the wrong position which caused her partner to miss all his strokes with the niblick on that day.

*From a recent photo taken by friends—and now published for the first time—on exceptional authorization*

Queen Elisabeth of Belgium, at a balcony of an Italian villa on the Riviera

Pride? A little. But much more of a sort of quiet intellectual shyness that makes her hide some of her most brilliant mental gifts, among them a charming vein of humor—just as other people try hard to hide shortcomings and faults. And, perhaps even more than everything else, this: the rare gift of simplicity. Rare, for, as I have hinted above, it is not true that it is easy and natural to be simple when one stands, as kings do, on the topmost rung of the social ladder. How many climbers and bounders and snobs there are nowadays among dynasties and ex-dynasties!

The first time I met Queen Elisabeth, the trait I liked most was this supreme simplicity. It was refreshing to see that such an artistic and intelligent personality had not been spoiled in the least by the customary royal-bloodish and courtier environment. Refreshing—and inexplicable, at any rate for one like me, who has no taste for the perusal of *Gotha's Almanac* and who had forgotten who her father had been. When one hears of her father, one understands. Her father's memory is perhaps the only thought that makes her eyes light up with joyous pride; infinitely more than does the secular succession of grandeurs and of tragedies in the Germanic history of the house of Wittelsbach.

It may be that the younger Elisabeth inherited some of the inner glow that made the life of the other Wittelsbach, Elisabeth, the Austrian Empress, such a beautiful poem and such a lonely tragedy. But while the cult of beauty destroyed in the Austrian Elisabeth the deepest springs of human sympathy and of self-sacrifice, Elisabeth, the Belgian, showed herself worthy of entering upon her womanhood by the side of a man who, like King Albert, had a higher sense of life because he acknowledged duties toward his fellow men. That is why, faithful companion to the King and warmly sharing his *credo,* she realizes that life is beautiful provided one does not forget that it is neither an Achilleion pageant nor a selfish wandering.

## XXV

### Vandervelde

TO JUDGE by a few patronizing French compliments to Belgians on the one hand, by learned old German war publications on the other, one might begin to doubt whether there really does exist a particular Belgian soul. True that peasants and artizans used to say in Belgium at the time of the wars of the French Revolution, the ups and downs of which put the ultimate fate of Flanders at stake every time: "We do not want to be Prussian slaves, or French *sans-culottes* or Dutch heretics."

In the aristocracy too, and in the middle classes, one finds ways of thinking and feeling, traits of character, that are Belgian—and exclusively Belgian, although the aristocracy is full of cousinages in France, and the bourgeoisie almost cosmopolitan in the heat of its trading-fever. If one may note a visible decrease of the old Belgian characteristics anywhere, it is, since the war, in that portion of the well-to-do and timorous middle classes who seek, in an artificial patriotic ardor, a defense against a Socialist danger that resides mainly in their imagination. Reading and copying the Nationalist outbursts of the reactionary French literature of the Daudets and the Maurras, they work in reality—for all the Belgian ribbons in their buttonholes—only toward the destruction of their country, three million in which speak French and four million Flemish. If there is one nation that can be such only by answering to Renan's definition, it certainly is Belgium: "A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in reality are one, make up

that soul, that spiritual principle. One is the possession in common of a rich inheritance of memories, the other is the actual desire of living together, the will to turn to account together the inheritance bequeathed undivided." Now, the real "inheritance of memories" is, for the Belgians, the secular struggle for freedom which their towns have always waged against foreign lords; and a "desire of living together" can only spring from the satisfaction of the Flemish who will no longer be treated as an inferior nationality.

To preach Nationalism where there are two nations, is to work against the very essence of Belgium. That is why I was not really surprised to find that one of the most essentially Belgian, of all the Belgians I have met, is Émile Vandervelde, the Socialist leader who has for many years been president of the Bureau of the Second Internationale. Sprung from an upper-class family of Brussels, Vandervelde felt himself drawn toward Socialism when he was still a student at the university. The motives which prompted him then, toward 1890, were probably the same as those which are still to-day the driving impulse of his amazing activity: the hatred of injustice; the old Belgian love of siding with the weak, because the weak are brothers.

His intellectual value, his eloquence, his undying enthusiasm, have made him the unquestioned head of the Belgian Socialist Party—of a party so well worth studying, for, alone perhaps in the whole of Europe, it has striven to cover the country with cooperative stores, banks, industrial enterprises, which call forth the admiration of "big-business" men, when they discuss them frankly in private.

Like party, like leader. This Socialist, this Republican, this chief of the Socialist Internationale, did not hesitate one moment, on August 4, 1914, as soon as he saw his country invaded, to become minister of the King, of a king, however, whose qualities rendered his task singularly easy.

There had been, before Vandervelde, Socialist ministers in conservative governments, the most famous cases being those of Briand and of Millerand in France, but their entrance into a Cabinet proved the first step toward an evolution that quickly led them out of the official ranks of their party. Vandervelde was the first who became Cabinet minister with the assent of his party. He was copied, shortly afterward, by Guesde and Sembat who, in France, entered a Ministry of National Defense; and later, but still during the war, by Henderson who became member of the War Committee in the Lloyd George Cabinet. But that was during the war. In Belgium, since then, Vandervelde has several times been Cabinet minister again, for justice first, for foreign affairs later. And, a unique case, he has remained a faithful member of his party.

That is because Vandervelde is, perhaps of all the statesmen living in Europe, the one who best succeeds in blending in his mind loyalty to his ideal with a sense of practical realization that life has taught him in Belgium. He does not forget his ideal, but, Belgian, he does not spend himself on building castles in the air. He likes any task, even a humble one, and does it, when he sees in it a contribution, however small, toward the final achievement of which he never doubts, while he knows he will never see it.

Son of a country that is a real laboratory, at the crossing of every road and even, historically speaking, on the Roman-German borderland, Vandervelde, who was minister of foreign affairs before and after the conclusion of the Locarno Treaties, has shown a breadth of vision about the European reconstruction problem that might, with great advantage, have been shared earlier by the leaders of the Great Powers. Here, for instance, is what he wrote about the military control of Germany when the Locarno Treaties had not yet cleared up the atmosphere:

"It would be the height of folly and a dangerous illusion to believe that the problem of security, a problem not only for France, for Belgium, but for all the nations, can be solved by military control.

"As long as there will be in Europe a nation of forty million souls, tremendously armed herself, and strengthened by various alliances, pretending to impose on another people of sixty million men the obligation of being disarmed—save for a police force—and to undergo passively the law of the conqueror, you can set up all the controls of the world: these will never prevent the conquered from resorting to every kind of subterfuge to get up for itself at least a means of resistance.

"Nothing, at least nothing stable, will come of imposing disarmament on a few peoples. Everything can be done by instilling, by fair international solutions, into all the peoples, the will to disarm."

Loyal to his ideals in a victorious Belgium, he was also faithful to them when he used to go to encourage the Belgian soldiers in their trenches along the Yser. It is from this period that dates a declaration he issued in answer to those Belgians who planned annexation of German territories for the day of victory: "To annex by force, to create new irredentisms in Europe, to alter a defensive war against German imperialism into a war of conquest against the German people, would be to bereave our cause of all that goes to make its grandeur and its legitimacy."

Socialism—or at least the kind that goes quoting Marx as Revelation—usually affects a scant belief in the value of individuals.

With Vandervelde at the helm, the Belgian Socialists have, in a few years, won a series of battles which, formerly, would have entailed street fights: universal suffrage, syndical freedom, old-age pensions, legal enforcement of the eight-hour day, income tax and death duties. It is rather difficult to believe that all this would have materialized without Vandervelde, the human idealist and the Belgian realist.

## XXVI

### Krassin

AS HE was not a visionary like Lenin, not a charlatan like so many of the other leaders of new Russia, no one has spoken of Krassin. And yet he was a great personality, morally and intellectually. Few men, among the many I negotiated with in the years immediately following on the peace treaties, made a deeper impression on me. But even those who did not feel drawn by the blunt loyalty of the man could not but be interested by the extremely unusual combination of a successful business man and of an uncompromising revolutionary which he presented.

The external elements of his life are soon described.

Leonid Borissovich Krassin was born in 1870 at Kurgan near Tobolsk, in Siberia. When a student in St. Petersburg Technological Institute, in the 'nineties, he was already an active revolutionary. He was soon sent back to Siberia, but left with his parents, although under strict police supervision. During that period he became a close associate of another Siberian, Lenin.

Krassin's cooperation was valuable to the revolutionary leaders because he made a point of remaining on excellent terms with the capitalistic circles. It was owing to his capitalistic friends that he was able to leave for Berlin where he completed his technical education at the Charlottenburg Politechnicum. Having there established relations with the famous German firm of Siemens, he was sent back by them to Russia in their branch company.

Gradually Krassin acquired powerful friends in business

and even in government circles; he became rich, and remained an active revolutionary. The police arrested him more than once, but he always managed to clear himself of all suspicion. Was he not a rich man? That was enough for police psychology.

It was during the period of 1906 to 1910 that he was most active in organizing secret societies in Russia and in procuring money for his old friend, Lenin, in Switzerland.

It has been said that having become a director of the German electrical companies in Russia during the war, Krassin transformed them into centers of German influence. I knew that even revolutionaries of the Menshevik type had whispered the words of treason. . . .

One evening in Paris, on his way to the Genoa Conference, Krassin, who wanted to hear from me about the Conference plans, called on me at the Italian Embassy. When business was over, he began speaking quietly with me of the war days. I mentioned to him the accusation I had heard.

And he replied in his hard, always level voice:

"It was probably my duty to do that; but I did not. Grand dukes and generals did not need our help to destroy their Russia."

The pure ones of Bolshevism never forgave Krassin for not having immediately joined Lenin as soon as the latter had seized power. But Lenin must have thought differently since, after a few months, he appointed Krassin commissar for commerce and industry, and later on, to the new commissariat for foreign trade. "The creation of the system of monopolizing all trade relations with foreign countries has been the most thrilling experience of my life." So Krassin told me more than once when he had become, technically speaking, a diplomat. It was clear that, reserved though he was, and master of his language though he was,

the new job was not to his taste. He liked it only during the period of May, 1920, to March, 1921, when he developed in London a persistent campaign to obtain *de jure* recognition for his government. This was action; and he liked results, not dreamy preparations; that is why he was a bad Bolshevik.

I had been the first foreign minister of a Great Power to advocate the necessity, even from a social conservation point of view, of not giving to the masses the impression that we were fighting Bolshevism within its Russian boundaries. On August 6, 1920, I had declared in the Italian Parliament: "With this barbed-wire fence policy against Russia Monsieur Clemenceau gave the new Russian leaders a precious alibi. Faced with the ruins they had heaped, they excused themselves on the grounds of their everlasting: *'Due to the bourgeois siege.'* For my part I declare that the Russian communistic experiment must be left to develop freely—within Russia, of course—till the end, that is to say, as long as the Russians will keep and bear it. If Bolshevism must die, it must die of its own errors, not through external pressure. We should simply create a legend of martyrdom."

A few weeks after this speech I saw Krassin for the first time. He told me: "In Russia, they are not satisfied with your formula: it was more comfortable to play the martyr. But I believe in gradual progress, no matter if slow."

"Then you are simply a poor democrat like myself," I rejoined with a smile.

He shrugged his shoulders. Only after his death did I learn that during the first months of the Revolution he had written:

"What I see around me has deepened my conviction that the Russian people has a long way to go before it can call

itself civilized. The aristocracy has embittered and brutalized the masses to their very bones, and very likely two generations will have to grow up in more healthy surroundings before we can begin to behave like ordinary human beings."

Enthusiastic as he was for the monopoly of foreign trade, of which he had practically been the author, he frankly admitted to me, during a series of conversations I had with him in April, 1921, in order to create a business current between Italy and Russia, that, I quote his very words, "this form of trade has been forced on Russia not so much by communistic theories as out of sheer necessity and owing to the peculiar circumstances of the time." Such words, spoken as they were in my apartment in a Piccadilly Hotel, really betrayed the mind of a Westerner. And Krassin has certainly been the most Western of all the Kremlin leaders.

Probably his deepest link with the Revolution, in the bloody form it took, was his old Siberian love for Lenin. But even of Lenin he did not deny—at least when speaking with me—that the intellectual limitations of the demigod were much greater than admirers and haters have ever realized, as I shall show in the chapter on Lenin.

In the gang around Lenin, no man of the new Russia was so outspoken as Krassin, even in Moscow. "All the evils and hardships we are suffering now," he said at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, "are due to the fact that the Communist Party consists of ten per cent. of convinced idealists, ready to die for the cause, but incapable of living for it, and of ninety per cent. of unscrupulous time-servers who have simply joined the party so as to get jobs."

Lenin's death endangered Krassin's position for a moment, but he gradually weathered the storm, and at the end

of 1924 he was appointed ambassador in Paris. He had become the successor of Izvolsky. But like the famous imperial Ambassador, he failed with the French. He was glad to be transferred, one year later, to London, as a simple chargé d'affaires. Titles and ranks meant nothing to this man.

He died a few months later. His death accounts for many of the Russian and Anglo-Russian blunders of these last years.

## XXVII

### Stambulisky

IT IS not good for politicians to utter prophetic words: when they do, it means that they see so far into the future that they risk under-estimating the obstacles and passions of the moment. The penalty they pay for their far-seeing is to end their days in exile—when they are not killed. Only, one or two generations later, monuments are built to their memory.

Stambulisky, the leader of the Peasant Party in Bulgaria, himself an old peasant, is one of the Europeans who saw farthest into the future. He paid for it with his life.

When, at the time of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ferdinand of Coburg, in agreement with Austrian diplomacy, raised Bulgaria to the rank of independent kingdom, Stambulisky alone damped the complacent enthusiasm of the official classes for this outward success.

"The independence proclaimed in this manner," he declared in Parliament, "represents a danger for the country. It is the beginning of a policy that will inevitably bring us to war. This leaning toward Austria, contrary to the permanent feelings of the country, we shall pay for with a catastrophe."

When, with Austria's war against Serbia, his prophecy was about to be fulfilled, Stambulisky was already leader of a fairly numerous group of peasants in Parliament; for the peasant masses had answered his call, tired as they were of paying the damage for the struggles between the

partizans of Austria and those of Russia. Stambulisky's war-cry—the cause of the peasants' independence can only be defended by the peasants—had echoed widely. On the day on which the Austrians invaded Serbia, he rose in Parliament, surrounded by his group, and cried out:

"I wish victory to our Serbian brothers!"

The majority, subservient to King Ferdinand who had never ceased feeling in German, covered him with insults:

"Go, you traitor; you are nothing but a Serbian!"

And he replied calmly:

"I am neither a Serbian nor a Bulgarian; I am a Southern Slav."

The blasphemy—which will prove the truth of the future—had never yet been spoken in the Bulgarian Parliament.

It was through his opposition to Bulgaria's entry into the World War that Stambulisky came into international notice. When King Ferdinand was preparing the entry of Bulgaria into the war on the side of Germany against the will of the Bulgarian people and in contravention of the Bulgarian Constitution, Stambulisky, as the head of the National Peasant Party and as the leader of the largest opposition group in the National Assembly, told him during an audience at the Palace (September 17, 1915) that if he led Bulgaria in on the side of Germany, he would lose his throne and possibly his head. The royal answer was: prison, first; then, a death sentence. But Ferdinand was a prudent man, and the sentence was commuted into life imprisonment.

For three long years the Bulgarian people were in the trenches, and Stambulisky was in prison. Then came the inevitable. In September, 1918, the Bulgarian Army collapsed. Stambulisky was pardoned and immediately summoned to the Palace. King Ferdinand was all smiles

and allurement; he finally understood, however, that all his tricks were lost on Stambulisky, who after two hours of stormy conversation bent the King into suing for armistice and peace. But just after the Bulgarian peace delegation, headed by the American Chargé d'Affaires, had departed for the Allied Headquarters at Salonika, Ferdinand, furious at having given in to the peasant, asked for some German divisions to prolong the war "to the last drop of blood"—of his subjects, of course. Stambulisky was then constrained to lead a Bulgarian Army in revolt and to force the King to abdicate.

After a period of depression and failures, everybody in Bulgaria agreed that Stambulisky must be called to power; some because they trusted in him, others to expose him. Stambulisky did not shirk the responsibilities with which he was faced. Protesting all the while, he agreed to sign the Treaty of Neuilly, so hard on Bulgaria. By this act he brought to reason the militarists who, supported by the old politicians, clamored for a new war adventure rather than submit to the disarmament clauses of the treaty of peace.

On the other hand, the Moscow Communist Internationale endeavored to start a revolution in Bulgaria as they had done in Hungary. But Stambulisky showed his determination, without excessive scruples for formulæ.

As soon as he had returned to Sofia from the trip to Paris where, on November 27, 1919, he had signed the peace treaty, he was confronted with a general strike of all public servants which the Socialist and Communist Parties had started. The Communists were frankly aiming at a social revolution, while the Socialists had joined them only for motives of petty revenge on Stambulisky for his having formed a Cabinet without them. But the Premier had a law enacted by the National Assembly at once; the

strikers, being practically all demobilized soldiers, were called up again and subjected to military discipline; while all the public services—railroads, posts, telegraph—were taken over by volunteers of the Peasant Party. The strike was broken, and the strikers, once more demobilized, returned to their jobs after signing a declaration "never to go on strike again." Thus did Stambulisky save Bulgaria from the plight of Hungary.

Free from immediate concerns in home politics, Stambulisky bent his efforts on a renovation of Bulgaria's international situation. In March, 1923, he concluded a reparation settlement which practically reduced Bulgaria's reparations from 2,250,000,000 to 550,000,000 gold francs, though all the other political parties were advocating the idea that Bulgaria ought to initiate a policy of passive resistance.

In April, 1923, he signed the Treaty of Nish with Yugo-Slavia—the first one really aiming at establishing peace between the two neighboring Slav countries on a permanent and loyal basis. He had not, now that he had become prime minister, forgotten or abjured the belief he had professed in Parliament on the day upon which Serbia had been attacked by Austria.

I had a proof of this in a conversation I had with him on the eve of his last intervention at the League of Nations. I was out of power, but Stambulisky wanted my confidential opinion on what was still his supreme dream—a federal union between the two Southern Slav nations, Bulgaria and the new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. We met in Milan, and I accompanied him as far as the Swiss frontier. I told him frankly that this was one of the numerous cases in which European interests were, in my opinion, identical with interests strictly Italian. "For," I said to him, "the union would do away with the everlasting and

bloody and beastly struggle in Macedonia; and it would, in doing so, prove a boon for the peace of Europe. On the other hand, in a full Yugo-Slav[1] federation, the old rancors of Austrian origin about the boundaries with Italy, about the Adriatic, and so on, will lose all their actual artificial importance, and the adjunction of the Bulgarian factor will bring more fresh air and wider horizons. Moreover you will all become richer, and an industrial and productive Italy has need of rich neighbors."

Stambulisky, although he knew in a general way my ideas, was struck with surprise at my ungarnished frankness, and exclaimed:

"You are the first Italian not to be terrified by the idea of a Yugo-Slav union."

And I: "And you are the first politician from the Balkans I have met, who thinks of the good of his country otherwise than in terms of war and annexations."

He left me highly satisfied, full of optimism. I, for my part, prayed, on that very day, that militaristic and Macedonian elements in Bulgaria might not learn too quickly what the ultimate aims of their Prime Minister were. It was not difficult to foresee that these were not going to see their jobs threatened without trying to do something about it, and "something" over there, and for soldiers, frequently means—murder.

Effectively, on June 8, 1923, Stambulisky was killed. Macedonian adventurers and demobilized Bulgarian officers had done the deed. With the new régime, the traditional hatred between Belgrade and Sofia was rekindled. Everything was once more in order.

Nevertheless, the idea of Bulgaria's union with Yugo-Slavia is alive again, and what is remarkable is that some among Stambulisky's bitter opponents are becoming ad-

[1]Yugo means *Southern* in Serbian as well as in Bulgarian.

vocates of this idea. Perhaps it is one of them who, some day, will bring about its realization. History is full of such paradoxical examples. The Liberals advocated, in Germany, the union of the German States, but it was the Junker Bismarck who caused the union to materialize; the democratic apostle, Mazzini, was the first to preach at the dawn of the Risorgimento the unification of Italy, but it was Count Cavour who realized the idea of the conspirator.

No doubt Stambulisky committed mistakes in his internal administration. The imprisonment of the former ministers of the War Cabinet, on November 4, 1919, by an executive decree instead of a judicial warrant; the enactment of a special law for their trial and punishment; the disqualification and expulsion of thirteen opposition deputies from the National Assembly for alleged irregularities in their election; the imprisonment of twenty-two former ministers of the War Cabinets by a popular referendum—all these measures must no doubt be condemned. But it is to the lasting credit of Stambulisky that he prevented the summary trial and execution of the war ministers, as their peers were dealt with in Greece. Moreover, to be fair, one must also remember that all this happened in Bulgaria.

The essence of Stambulisky's thought was bright enough to mark him out as one of the precursors of pacified Europe. He wanted the union of all the Southern Slavs—and the idea is making way in spite of dynastic and militaristic opposition. He wanted the Bulgarian peasants, that is, the immense majority of the nation, to be no longer at the mercy of a government that traded on them shamelessly; and the Bulgarian peasantry, strengthened by the vigor he managed to instil into it, is certain of counting more and more every day in the life of the State. This will be all the better for the peace of Europe, for peasants do not like wars.

Stambulisky's murderers are said to have obliged him to dig the hole in which he was thrown a few minutes later: such was the order they had received—a token that both the man and his idea fell into nothingness together.

After seven years, Stambulisky is more alive than all the shadows of dynasts and militarists who still parade about the Balkans. And he will be more so in the future.

The peasants are waking up everywhere; the days of their Jacqueries, when, exhausted with suffering, they revolted and burned a château or two, only to fall again immediately into their former abjection, are over.

Stambulisky was the leader of the first Jacquerie in power; he put up a good show, even in practical statesmanship.

# A CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY

## HOW FASCISM CAME

*Coloro che dannano i tumulti fra i nobili e la plebe mi pare che biasimino quelle cose che furon prima cagione di tener libera Roma; e che considerino piu a' rumori ed alle grida che di tali tumulti nascevano che ai buoni effetti che quelli partorivano.*—MACHIAVELLI

## XXVIII

### Sonnino
### or
### The Diplomatic Origins of Fascism

WHEN the World War broke out, I was in China as Italian envoy. The Italian Foreign Minister, Marquis di San Giuliano, desired that the telegram which he sent to all the ambassadors asking for their opinion on the situation be, exceptionally, sent also to the young diplomat who was then at the head of the Peking Legation, an important post, but not one connected with the terrible events which were then taking place. I make bold to say that the exception honored San Giuliano, proving as it did that he bore me no grudge—on the contrary—for the divergences of opinion, sometimes very marked, which we had in 1909, when I was councilor to his Embassy in London, and in 1910-11 in Rome where, having become minister for foreign affairs, he had asked me to be his *chef de cabinet.* San Giuliano was convinced that while Germany was on her way to omnipotence, England and France were on a down-hill path. When I objected by indicating to him that the atmosphere of court flattery in Hohenzollern Germany was fatally lowering the moral character of the Germans, and that history is made with men, he would smile:

"You are Hegelian. . . ."

In Rome—and that is what induced me to stay—I shared all his thoughts and loyal efforts to find a means of agreement with Austria that would do away with the

necessity, humiliating for both parties, of having for ever to appeal to Berlin as to an umpire.

To San Giuliano's telegram I answered from Peking:

"I can, and will, only judge by what I see here. The progress of Germany in the Far East was from year to year becoming more remarkable. England was soon going to be outdistanced. Even from a diplomatic point of view, Germany was about to reach the primacy she enjoyed in Constantinople with Marschall. In spite of this, and although analogous situations were revealing themselves the whole world over, Imperial Germany stakes her all on the dice of war. This shows that the leading spirits in Berlin are not up to their task or that they harbor dangerous claims to domination. In both cases, our way seems clearly indicated. Neutrality becoming for us a manifest duty, it remains to be decided what shape it will take. For my part, unless you send me different instructions, I shall intensify and develop our interests here without making any mystery of my friendship for the colleagues of the Entente."

The "different instructions" of course never came; but, one month later, a letter did, written in San Giuliano's own handwriting, tormented with gout, saying this only:

"Dear Sforza, I am afraid that you were right; and that the old tottering mail-coach is safer than the shining motor-car. How I do envy you your life in Peking!"

The words were echoes of our old conversations in Hyde Park. With his unfailing memory San Giuliano had remembered a comparison of mine whose meaning was that with the marvelous German organization everything might depend on one foolish driver.

San Giuliano being what he was, nothing strange in that—when Austria had sent her ultimatum to Belgrade, leaving her Italian ally totally in the dark up to the last moment—he could not make up his mind to denounce im-

mediately an alliance of which the Vienna Cabinet had so openly violated the most essential clauses. But when San Giuliano began, in September, 1914, to ponder on the manner in which Italy might enter into the war on the side of the Entente, his ideas were marked with a clearness of vision to which I had not been accustomed from him when we were together in London and in Rome. Death was upon him, he knew it, and he waited for it stoically, working all the while. When it came, on October sixteenth, all that had made up the superficial and artificial side of his mind—the importance he attached to contingencies, too great a reliance on cleverness—had disappeared. Italy would have had everything to gain in keeping as her program the ideas he had put down. Schematically, they come to this:

—to make sure that the Entente, which inclined wrongly to consider Germany as the main enemy, would not be tempted to spare Austria, the chief enemy of Italy, (and certain English hesitancies during the war showed how shrewd his surmise had been);

—to enter into the war with Rumania (and to this end he gave Baron Fasciotti, Italian Minister in Bucharest, instructions, the non-confirmation of which was a great loss to the Entente);

—to reach the Alps, our natural frontier, everywhere, as far as the gulf of Fiume where Dante had fixed, in the *Divine Comedy,* the eastern boundaries of Italy[1] and to acquire a few islands of Dalmatia;

—to make such terms with the Serbian Government that war would be waged against Austria to the end in constant military and political agreement (which would have eliminated all possibility, on the one hand, of a survival of Austria-Hungary as a Great Power and, on the other, of annexations

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[1] . . . *presso del Quarnaro,*
*che Italia chiude e i suoi termini bagna.* (Dante, *Inferno,* Canto IX.)

in Dalmatia, although Sazonow had offered these to Marquis Carlotti, Italian Ambassador to Russia, during the first days of August. Sazonow's too hasty and indiscreet overtures had, for that matter, made on San Giuliano an impression contrary to that which the Russian Minister, possibly misled by Carlotti's enthusiasm for the Entente, had hoped for).

San Giuliano's ideas for the post-war period were not less far-seeing. They can be synthesized thus:

—a treaty of alliance among the victors in order—he wrote in the warlike language of the time—to "maintain the new map of Europe" (but even if he did not say so, it was clear that an alliance as wide would inevitably have worked in the interest of European reconstruction, for it could not have functioned exclusively *against* some one);

—an entente, even after the war, with Belgrade, which would have ensured a pacific Italian influence in the Balkans.

On San Giuliano's death, Salandra, then prime minister, offered the portfolio of foreign affairs to Sonnino who accepted it.

Of all the leading men in Italy, Sonnino had been the only one who—when the World War broke out—had thought that Italy might, or should, side with the Central Empires.

Giolitti, who, on his return from a trip to London, was in Paris on the first of August, went to the Italian Embassy and declared to the Chargé d'Affaires Ruspoli that "Italy, through the Triple Alliance Treaty, had incurred no obligation to go to war, seeing that Austria was attacking Serbia, whereas the Treaty was purely defensive and enjoined Italian intervention by the side of the Allies only if, and when, they were attacked." Such were his very words, which the Chargé d'Affaires of course hastened to repeat to San Giuliano who, as soon as he heard that Giolitti had arrived at his country place at Cavour, answered him: "Your

opinion is the one I transmitted to Salandra and to the King, and the one that was approved."

Bissolati, the leader of the Reformist Socialist Party, wrote on August second to his friend Bonomi that he was "glad that the neutrality view had triumphed," but that "one must prepare the soul of the proletariat for war against the militaristic forces."

Signor Mussolini shouted in his paper, *L'Avanti,* that the war was a war between capitalistic governments and that neutrality alone was possible, pending the advent of an international social revolution which he promised as forthcoming.

Sonnino, Sonnino alone then, found, during the very first days, that Italy had to side with the Central Powers. He owned this in a letter to the former Minister Bertolini, dated August 14, 1914, a letter which has been published; but speaking with Bertolini two weeks earlier he had been even more categorical in his disapproval of the declaration of neutrality. I had Bertolini with me at the Spa Conference as second Italian delegate. During the long evenings we spent together, we often spoke of those first days of the war:

"How is it," I asked Bertolini, "that Sonnino, who was so touchy on the point of national dignity, overlooked at the very beginning that, even discarding any other consideration, such as the fact that the treaty was purely defensive, Austria had broken her pledge and had wronged us by preparing ultimatum and war without warning Italy in any way?"

And Bertolini explained that, if the Tory tendencies of his friend biased him unconsciously in favor of the Central Empires, what really decided him, on those very first days, was the naïve pride of going against the country's unanimous opinion—the opinion of the King, of Conserva-

tives like Salandra, of Liberals like Giolitti, of Socialists like Bissolati.

This came from an essential trait in Sonnino: son of a Scotch Presbyterian mother and of an Italian Jew, he was obsessed by a puritanical and, seemingly, pharisaical mania for thanking God that he was "not as other men are"; a mania which may easily become intolerable cant in private life and an element of incomprehension in public life. Political honesty, the honesty of great men like Cavour who, as it always happens in politics, assented to compromises in transitory incidents to which they would not have condescended for their own private affairs, but to which they resorted in view of some general noble purpose—this honesty was suspicious to the puritan Sonnino. When, as a young diplomat before the war, I used to see him fairly often in his beautiful solitary house near the Trajan Forum, I could not help being unpleasantly struck by this guileless superiority complex of which he was the first victim. Waiting for him sometimes in his library, round which ran, carved in the oak of the topmost shelf, his motto: *Quod aliis licet non tibi,* I could not help wondering, in my tolerant Italian way, why this man did not feel that such maxims are beautiful only when they are not boasted of.

The case for Italy, however, was so self-evident that its cogency dawned on Sonnino as soon as, on San Giuliano's death on October 16, 1914, he had accepted the Prime Minister's offer and had become foreign minister.

Article VII of the Triple Alliance Treaty bound Austria-Hungary and Italy, if they wished to alter the *status quo* in the Balkans "by a temporary or permanent occupation," to come to "a previous agreement based upon the principle of a reciprocal compensation for every advantage, territorial or other, that each of them might obtain over and above the present position."

Even admitting first Count Berchtold's Jesuitic *distinguo* that the Austrian occupation in Serbia was neither permanent nor temporary, but merely "momentary," the fact remained that Austria was waging war to secure for herself in the Balkans, if not "territorial," at least "other advantages"; that for this she owed "compensation"; and that she had violated the Treaty by failing to come to a "previous agreement."

San Giuliano, enriched by the bitter experience of his long vain efforts to come to an understanding with Austria that would not be merely formal—efforts in which I had collaborated most eagerly—grasped the futility of discussing anything with a Power that was destined either to utter ruin, or else to become an even more crying danger for Italy on the one hand and for the Balkan Peninsula on the other. Minds too fond of logic have upbraided him with not having denounced the Treaty immediately after Austria had so flagrantly violated it. Such deeds, very noble individually as they may be, are the kind one does not indulge in when the future of forty million men is at stake. But we have seen what his thoughts were when he lay dying, and that they lacked neither breadth nor sense of the future.

Just as if he wanted to atone for having failed to grasp from the beginning that—for one who sought a solid juridical ground—Article VII furnished manifest proof of the Austrian guilt, Sonnino, as soon as he came to power, clung to it. It was even more than the lawyer seeking to get compensation for a breach of contract; it was really, in him, the reawakening of the passion of his fathers for the letter of the law. With him, as sometimes with his fathers, the letter killed the spirit, that is, the understanding that a new history was beginning, and that the Triple Alliance Treaty itself, violated as it had been, was nothing but the débris of a far greater wreck. When Italy entered the war in May,

1915, Sonnino published a *Green Book* that contained his negotiations with Austria. The man who, alone in Italy, had begun by thinking that our country ought to have joined the Central Powers, wrote in the final dispatch in which he notified the end of the Triple Alliance:

"By disregarding the obligations imposed by the Treaty, Austria-Hungary profoundly disturbed the Balkan *status quo,* and created a situation from which she alone would profit to the detriment of interests of the greatest importance which her Ally had so often affirmed and proclaimed.

"So flagrant a violation of the letter and the spirit of the Treaty not only justified Italy's refusal to place herself on the side of her Allies in a war provoked without previous notice to her, but at the same time deprived the Alliance of its essential character and of its *raison d'être.*"

Italians and foreigners have reproached Sonnino with this: that in neither his *Green Book,* recording his negotiations with Austria, nor in the negotiations with the British, French and Russian Cabinets that led to the Treaty of London of April 26, 1915, was any trace of idealism or sentiment to be found. Far be it from me to gainsay the assertion. When, in Peking still, I read Sonnino's *Green Book,* I felt a burning pang of sorrow greater than any I felt later on during the dark hours of the war. All our Allies had experienced military reverses more or less similar to ours; none had leaders who seemed to delight in belittling their country's moral grandeur. The words *sacro egoismo* which are held up against Salandra were, in reality, justified in his mouth; with them, he simply wished to counterbalance what might have been excessive in the general enthusiasm then reigning in Italy among the young for a war of democracies against militarism. Only the way Sonnino led his negotiations gave a semblance of verisimilitude

to certain ungenerous foreign interpretations of the *sacro egoismo*. To be just to his memory, one has to add, however, that his error was simply an error of mental incomprehension. He failed to see the new human forces at stake—even stronger in Italy, at the time, than abroad; and he thought it was necessary to negotiate on the seemingly solid ground of "realities." It is always like that. When one fails to reckon with "idealism" or "sentiment," it is because one lacks an intellectual scope wide enough to embrace all the "realities."

For indeed, the most objective study of his Treaty of London proves that he did not have a glimmer of the political necessities which the dying San Giuliano had realized so clearly.

Whereas Giolitti foretold that the war would last three years—Giolitti was the only one, with Kitchener, to put down that estimate in the summer of 1914—Sonnino believed in a very short war; and the proof of this lies in the fact that, although he could have asked anything from the Powers which were so anxious for our support, he limited the foreign loans to Italy to the ridiculous sum of fifty million pounds.

San Giuliano had been especially preoccupied with a complete, efficient solidarity of the Allies in the war against Austria; he had not in vain lived as ambassador in London, where he had realized the snobbishness of "society," which looked upon Austrians and Hungarians as "very nice people" because they gave shooting-parties and were fond of horses (and stupid as these reasons seem, they nevertheless helped Austria with official England during the war). Sonnino secured no guarantee whatever for the conduct of the war; and even less for the future.

Having by the Treaty of London obtained a great part of Dalmatia, he was obliged—contrary to what San

Giuliano had thought—not only to have no understanding whatever with Serbia, but to consider her as a potential enemy. And he thought to ward off the danger by exacting absolute secrecy about his Treaty of London—which of course, two weeks after its signature, became known to the Serbian Government.

Results were not slow in coming: from the very day of Italy's entrance into the war, General Cadorna noted that the collaboration with the Serbian Army which he had expected to be close, failed to materialize. He had not wanted the annexation of Dalmatia, he had even advised against it (like his successor Diaz, he declared—and both told me—that, in case of a new war, Dalmatia would have to be evacuated immediately), but Sonnino had, disregarding Cadorna's advice, included Dalmatia in his list of annexations; and from the moment Italy had entered the war, the Serbians ceased all attacks against Austria and applied themselves to Albania. When, later on, I discussed this phase of the war with Pachich and with the highest Serbian military authorities, my objections about their passivity at that time were not contested by them. They were not very proud of themselves. But one excuse for their attitude they did give: "One of our assets," they told me, "in fighting against an enemy so much more powerful than we, was the desertions that we provoked on the Austrian front among the Croat, Dalmatian and Slovene regiments; your Treaty of London that took a portion of Dalmatia from the Southern Slavs became, in the hands of the Austrian High Command, a marvelous weapon with which they gave their Slav soldiers a popular war slogan: 'war on Italian imperialism.' "

In spite of factual evidence, Sonnino went his way. His moral character which had all the qualities inherent in its defects, had an absolute contempt for all the catchwords of

the time, and for propaganda. The painful and gigantic travail of the nationalities in Austria had escaped him before; and now he took it for a clever piece of the propaganda he so deeply despised. This was his heaviest mistake. He never believed that Austria might disappear, as Bissolati was preaching in Italy and as I was warning him from Corfu and from Macedonia where I had been sent after the entrance of Italy into the war.

Honest as he was, he did not escape the frequent illusion of mistaking his own forecasts and plans for the interests of his country. Each year of the war was worth a century of experience, but he shut his eyes and stuck solely to his Treaty of London, to the letter of the Law.

On the eve of the great Austro-German offensive against Serbia (summer, 1915) the Italian High Command had agreed with the French to send a common expedition to the Serbian front. It was to be commanded by an Italian general; the French, always fond of titles, had thought of the Duke of Aosta. Cadorna was hoping thus to win a serious advance on the Carso, and possibly the conquest of Trieste, as a result of a decrease of the Austrian forces along the more difficult Italian front.

But Sonnino refused; he felt that such a close Italo-Serbian military collaboration would have entailed a revision of his London Treaty.

Later on, obliged to send a division to the Macedonian front,—a division that constantly fraternized with the Serbians with whom it had the most cordial relations,—he always rejected my urgent requests to have the exceptional services recognized that our Thirty-fifth Division was rendering to the Serbians and to the common Allied cause. Our division—spread along a difficult front line—had little by little increased its effective force to seventy thousand men. The French Army Corps, farther east, were always

far below this figure. "Let us call our division what it is: an Army Corps," I said and wrote to him. "You often complain of the Allies, but if we are the first to belittle our efforts, can we expect the others to do us justice?"

But it was no use. And this unique thing happened in the war: that we gave the Macedonian troops the blood and force of an Army Corps, but we ourselves refused that justice be rendered to the extent of our collaboration.

Later on—especially when it became evident that the Entente would win the war with the help of the United States, and that President Wilson would not be bound by any secret treaties on the day of peace—I urged Sonnino on several occasions to come to an agreement with the Serbian Government, so as to enable us to go to the Peace Conference freer in the achievement of our general aims, and unfettered by a quarrel about the Adriatic frontier.

The period was very painful for this essentially honest man. On the one hand, he shut his eyes to facts; he hoped that the war would end in the manner he had imagined, leaving Austria still fairly strong, and with the Yugo-Slav dreams dispelled. On the other hand, he could not help feeling that the forecasts of the idealists might after all come true. In the summer of 1917 he accepted the proposal I made to bring Pachich to Rome in order to come to a compromise with him. I accordingly came with Pachich, who in his careful speeches gave Sonnino to understand that he was ready to accept a reasonable formula. Sonnino listened—and in the end answered nothing.

Pachich, who was as silent as Sonnino, only said to me: "I expected that." And he was not too disappointed, for, in his heart of hearts, like Sonnino, he inclined more toward a greater Serbia than toward a destroyed Austria.

I urgently requested Sonnino to have me recalled, but he just as urgently asked me to keep my post in Corfu.

"What is the use, if you contradict my language and my policy?"

And he replied (I quote his words literally): "You will go on speaking according to your conscience; I shall never give you the lie. Even now, I have not done so. Only"—and there he stopped a moment, and then went on, somewhat ashamed—"I am like the peasants; it is on the market-place, at the last minute, that I cut down my prices."

But if any one were to believe that in wishing me to go on gainsaying his silence by my words, he was indulging in Machiavellism (in the cheap sense modern cant has given to the word), he would be greatly mistaken. No man was less capable of such tricks than Sonnino. It was quite otherwise: it was the proof that his conscience ordained him to admit, as possibly true, a faith opposed to his, which he knew to be as sincere as his own.

I had no need of proofs to convince me that it was not a question of Machiavellism but a painful moral tragedy that I bowed to, meanwhile, however, deploring the disastrous results I foresaw for my country. Had I needed a proof, I should have had it when Wilson proclaimed his Fourteen Points. I was in duty bound to state my conviction once more to Sonnino. I did it in a long private letter, from which I quote these words:

". . . and at the Peace Conference they will all know how to pay lip-service to Wilson's Fourteen Points, and, underhand, to think only of their interests; we alone, bound by a formula too antithetical, will risk being at variance with Wilson and with everybody; and in a desperate struggle for the Treaty of London, we shall endanger all our interests. European hypocrisy will give itself *face,* as the Chinese say, by denouncing the Italian *sacro egoismo* which will probably turn out to be the least realistic of all the Allied egoisms."

A few days later, Sonnino answered, granting himself the one luxury of not quoting my letter: "One must admit that President Wilson's tenets may make the grounds for future discussion more complicated; I therefore authorize you to renew with Pachich the conversations you had with him before his last visit to Rome."

Pachich was not at Corfu at the time. Before he came back, three weeks later, Sonnino had written again to cancel his previous instructions, and asking me to "wait for new ones" which never arrived.

When peace came, he went to Paris alone, with his Treaty of London, with no other diplomatic or psychological preparation than that "pound of flesh"; and the inevitable happened. I say the "inevitable," for never has history seen a treaty of peace at the conclusion of a long war follow the lines which had been laid out in an entirely different atmosphere prior to that war.

The conduct of the Allies toward Italy was petty and, worse still, short-sighted. Wilson was wrong in insisting on an integral application of his principles on the Italian sector, when he had given way on so many others. He provoked among the Italians the impression that he wanted to retrieve his virginity at our expense.

But this does not lessen Sonnino's responsibility, for it had been easy to foresee that all this would happen, and had been foreseen.

The final mistake—the way he negotiated in Paris—was the counterpart of the initial one, that of the short war. During the Peace Conference this happened: that only those who had been branded as idealists had a clear vision of reality; as they had had at the beginning of the tragedy.

It was one of Bissolati's most faithful friends, Salvemini, who, in February, 1915,—whereas the Treaty of London was based on the assumption that the war would last but a few months,—wrote:

"The war will not be a military stroll; it will, on the contrary, be a very serious task. Germany will want to wage it on our territory; she will almost certainly try one of those rapid offensives for which she has already proved that she has the genius and force, thus obliging us to abandon the defense of the Venetian provinces and of the eastern frontier. We must prepare ourselves to face some reverses and, in any case, sacrifices long and great."

Later on, it was Bissolati from the Carso front, and I from the Balkans, who preached to Sonnino that, under the solid cover of a formidable army—the Hungarians, the Tyrolese and the Croats have always been among the finest soldiers in the world—the body of the Austrian Monarchy gave signs of mortal disease, and that one must prepare the war agreements and the peace agreements with those peoples who would become the Successor States of Austria. In vain: Sonnino was always opposed to the Czechoslovakian legions that we only succeeded later on, and in spite of him, in creating on our front; the creation of Yugo-Slav legions (which would probably have ruined the moral stamina of the Croat troops who always fought against us with fierce obstinacy) he always barred. Once he threatened Bissolati with resignation rather than to permit such a scheme. He had imagined a short war, a war that would end without the destruction of Austria, and he had never succeeded in realizing that history had taken the liberty of evolving on lines different from those he had laid down.

Mazzini, alone in a skeptical Europe, had foreseen, sixty years earlier, that the bigoted and illiberal Austria of the Habsburgs would fall to pieces one day and that the races subject to a hegemony which, in Mazzini's days, was only Teutonic, and later on became Germano-Magyar, would secure their independence. Italians faithful to the democratic traditions of our country, from the Radical Bissolati to the Conservative Albertini, had exalted Italian

intervention in the war as a sacrifice to be accomplished on behalf of a juster and freer Europe. The Italian soldiers who won on the Piave the first of the final battles of the Entente, fought for this ideal. One does not die as they died out of *sacro egoismo*.

The most magnificent victory crowned the sacrifice of half a million dead. Italy, indeed, not only conquered along the Alps, as far as the Quarnero, the most perfect natural boundary in the world, but she saw the disappearance of the great military power which, on her Oriental frontier, had so often hindered her freedom of action.

There is no exaggeration in saying that no one has, in Europe, won the war as Italy has. Not France who in an unpacified Europe may always fear the formidable German masses on her side. Not England who has lost her naval world-supremacy. Italy, on the contrary, through the disappearance of Austria which has given her back her freedom of action and of choice, has seen her friendship doubled in value for the other nations, and has acquired an influence that I, for my part, had planned predominant in Central Europe and in the Balkans—predominant in the interests of peace.

But nothing of all this had found its way in the plans of Sonnino, who failed to adjust himself to a reality so far beyond his field of vision. At the Peace Conference, he—as characteristic of those who can only conceive of victory if she be armed, snarling and bristling—unconsciously thought in all good faith that Italy would lose the fruit of her sacrifices if she did not settle in Dalmatia. Thus would he prevent the unification of the Yugo-Slav nation, whose existence as a state is for us one of the safest guarantees that Austria-Hungary, at whose hands we suffered so much in the past, will never rise again.

Sonnino, once in the poisoned atmosphere of the Paris

Conference, was, in his narrow honesty, outraged by the greeds and selfishness that his colleagues hid under the cloak of the new words. His isolation grew, and with it, the impossibility for him of coming to an understanding. He was left alone, alone with his Treaty of London.

Instead of being told that she had won more than her Allies, Italy saw her Plenipotentiary isolated, scoffed at and done—as when the Allies seized the opportunity of his momentary departure with Orlando from Paris, to give Smyrna to Greece, with nothing but a petty desire to play Sonnino a bad turn.

Sonnino being Italy at the Peace Conference, what more natural than that an important section of public opinion—encouraged in its error by a press which had assumed the monopoly of a yellow patriotism—imagined in its anger that victory had been "mutilated"? For my part (and in spite of the outrages which have always been hurled at me from that side, one of the idiosyncrasies of the professional "patriots" being to believe that by no one is the country beloved but by them) I am ready to recognize the psychological reasons underlying those emotions which clever ringleaders brought to white heat in order to fish in troubled waters afterward.

The conquest of Dalmatia, for instance, as it had been planned by Sonnino and his Nationalists was but a sign of weakness: a suspicious barbed-wire fence against our neighbors; whereas I, when I succeeded Sonnino, convinced of Italian superiority and sure of our power of penetration, wanted to throw open the doors of the East to Italian influence. But Dalmatia was full of towns, monuments, memorials of all kinds that were relics of past Italian glory. What more natural again than that an ill-informed public opinion, unaware of the fact that the vast majority of Dalmatians were Slavs and wanted to remain

Slavs, should bear with difficulty the idea of losing the ancient Venetian possession? However much opposed I was to a sterile anti-Slav policy that would have deprived us of any international liberty, making us heirs of that Austria we had destroyed, I could not help resenting somewhat the advice of "breadth of vision" which came so often from Allies who would probably have been annexationists against their true interest, had they been faced with an analogous case.

Moreover, during the war, it was thought in Italy, and sometimes rightly, that there was a tendency abroad to belittle our share in the struggle. The fact that Sonnino's policy, with its thesis of "our war" isolated from the general war, explained and excused certain attitudes, did not lessen the irritation of a people who had for the first time after centuries of division entered united the most gigantic conflict in history.

Irrefutable incidents increased this suspicious anger. The Italians suffered, for instance, a terrible reverse at Caporetto, a reverse from which, for that matter, they quickly recovered and from which they even drew a renewed spirit of resistance. But they examined and criticized the reasons for this reverse openly; whereas the Allies who had, each and all, suffered similar disasters, had kept silent about them. The Italians might have been proud of the moral courage they showed in not blinking the truth; but they resented the fact that everybody spoke of Caporetto whereas no one mentioned Charleroi or other defeats of the Allies.

Similarly, when, after Caporetto, the Italians alone built up a new line of defense on the Piave, and there started a stubborn resistance against the invader, they resented the fact that abroad the legend was artificially encouraged which told that the stand had been marshaled by Foch, and that

the arrival of foreign contingents had helped toward its success, both facts being equally contrary to truth. That this was both told and believed abroad increased the irritation at home.

All this, of course, might have disappeared like mist when the sun of victory rose; all this might have been nothing more than an instance of inevitable misunderstandings between Allies. But the disillusionment of the Peace Conference crystallized into a sort of general feeling that Italy had been bereft of the fruit of her victory. Nothing strange if a nation, worn down by four years of terrible sufferings, did not clearly see that the short-sighted selfishness of the Allies had a practical excuse in the lack of courage, initiative and imagination of our negotiators.

Anger and discontent were especially rife among the middle classes which had sacrificed so many thousands of their sons, as officers, on the battle-fields, and had cherished most ardently the noble memories of Dalmatia. Looking chiefly toward the past, as happens with classes imbued mainly with classical culture, it was no wonder they did not realize that only a policy of generous friendship with the new nationalities could insure to the future generations the gains of victory.

From among these groups, and for these worthy if ill-founded patriotic grudges, there sprang a youth sincere and disinterested, to throw itself enthusiastically into the Nationalist, and later, Fascist movement, never suspecting what might lie hidden under the patriotic slogans of the adventure.

## XXIX

### D'Annunzio
### or
### The Literary Origins of Fascism

ITALIANS of my generation probably first heard of the ideas that became successively Dannunzian, Nationalist, Fascist, when in their childhood in the 'eighties every one around them spoke of a Neapolitan member of Parliament, Rocco de Zerbi, who laid down the theory that Italy needed a "bath of blood" to strengthen herself. De Zerbi, who, involved in a graft affair, shortly after committed suicide, was probably the first Nationalist in democratic Italy.

His nationalism inevitably consisted in pretending that Italy should cease to be Italy, with her humanitarian feelings (she was the only great European State which had abolished the death sentence) and should become Germany—violent Bismarckian Germany, of course.

The men who felt thus—they were almost always men of letters or, worse still, would-be men of letters—had one excuse: the constant and burning comparison they made between the progress of Germany and that of Italy, the two great European nations which had achieved their political unification about the same time. The comparison was unfair, for Germany found herself rich in all the raw material that became her strongest asset in winning a place in new industrialized Europe; while Italy had succeeded in building up an industry, and even in becoming predominant in some branches, although everything was wanting to her that seems necessary to modern life: iron and coal.

When Gladstone, who before 1848 had written on behalf of our then enslaved country pages still sacred to us, came back on his last visit to Italy in 1888, he had, truth to tell, an entirely different impression. I found among my father's papers the statement of a conversation he had with the Grand Old Man. Probably my father, out of patriotism, had shown some impatience with certain shortcomings of ours. But Gladstone said:

"It is too much love that makes you unfair, you of the new generations. You are a northerner; but it is among the Neapolitans that I have felt the marvelous progress made by Italy. In the days of my youth, only a few were men of admirable moral and intellectual dignity; around them, the lazy, indifferent, sensual herd of a people devoid of any civic ideal. Now, live political struggles and intellectual discussions have replaced the sickening smell of sacristy and of incense of the past. Naples has become living Europe. You can judge for yourself about Milan and Turin; you have newspapers there that are among the best in the European press. If they are there, it is because they answer a need.

"I am also struck by your adaptation to a system of freedom and of tolerance. One would say that a century of struggles for freedom has not created a better atmosphere in France."

Such were Gladstone's impressions. It is hard to believe that he had any intention of flattery, since he was speaking to a young Italian who was of no importance to him.

The Gladstone conversation which my father recorded in his juvenile notes reminds me of other comments that I heard myself, some twenty years later, from one who, while far from reaching the intellectual standing of a Gladstone, was yet a master-connoisseur of men and of countries: King George of Greece. He liked to tell me, during our long walks around Aix-les-Bains, that the statesmen of

Liberal Italy had seemed to him—he thought especially of Depretis and Giolitti—the most perfect type of the disinterested servants of a country.

In the Italy of that time, there were complaints, certainly, pessimism and fierce criticism. But all that was a token of vitality, a proof that, if there were evils, they were fought. It is only with systems of government based on sham, like Fascism, that everything official becomes intangible.

Carducci, the poet of reunited Italy, was imbued, of course, with the moral integrity of his generation. But he had dreamed only of the grandeur of Italy, of Italy daughter of Rome. That is why, notwithstanding his rare poetical gifts, his fame never spread beyond the frontiers of his country; whereas his two immediate predecessors, Leopardi and Manzoni were, and have remained, universal poets, because they blended in their verse the most ardent love of Italy with the eternal and universal feelings of all poetry. They united Italy to the world; they did not confine her to the *romanità* of Carducci.

But if Carducci was sometimes narrow, he was never decadent. The note of decadence was struck by the young D'Annunzio who went on with the Roman exaltations of Carducci, but spiced them with a flavor of cruelty, of sensuality, of lust, which ought to have shown to everybody that he was far from believing in them, as pure and honest Carducci did.

Counterfeiting, or misunderstanding the formulæ that Nietzsche was then offering to an astonished Europe, D'Annunzio threw out to the young Italians the gospel of a new life, in which, truth to tell, there was nothing "Roman" left but the staging:

*"Morire, o gioire!*
*Gioire, o morire!"*[1]

[1] "Death or voluptuousness! Voluptuousness or death!"

The means to this end he found in what he called a *quadriga imperiale:* will, sensuality, pride, instinct.

That is a basic avowal. It is not with those four feelings that one can love one's country, for patriotism means denial of self for a greater cause; at best may they lead to nationalism, which is not only the counterfeit and caricature of patriotism, but, properly speaking, its very antithesis. Indeed the patriotism of the great Italians of the Risorgimento was probably the morally highest form ever taken by this passion. The very popular songs of the generations who fought against invading Austria had as refrain:

*"Ripassin l'Alpe e tornerem fratelli."*[1]

Mazzini, the prophet of the Italian awakening, went even further. He wrote: "I love my fatherland because I love the fatherlands." Nationalism, on the contrary, is, at its best, the application of the Marxian principle of the struggle of classes to the struggle of nations: a theory of hatred and, what politically speaking is even worse, a silly one, in an epoch when the wealth and prosperity of one nation are indissolubly linked to the wealth and prosperity of its neighbors.

The Italian Nationalists who had copied from the Frenchman Maurras his onsets against the great political revolutions of the end of the eighteenth century, and his anti-democratic theories, had in reality not quite found their man in D'Annunzio. With his astounding esthetic gifts, as undeniable is his indifference to ideas—he was none too likely to let himself be bound by one theory, he who had been in turn pagan with Carducci, Russian with Dostoyevsky; *Übermensch* with Nietzsche, free man with Whitman, decadent with Maeterlinck, and who probably never plagiar-

[1] "Let them go back across the Alps; and we'll be brothers again."

ized the compositions of any of them—but simply acted as a marvelous musical instrument, finding in the ideas of others nothing but a chance for dressing them up in his wonderful verse.

The *patria,* which had been holy with Leopardi and Manzoni, with Garibaldi and Mazzini, became for him what the ideas of the others had been: matter for music. When, in 1908, one of his tragedies, *La Nave,* was produced in Rome, one verse was like the burden of it: "Trim her sails and stand in for the world." The verse meant nothing, or nothing more than a vague imperial appetite for conquest; but for a youth enthralled by the masterly craft of the poet's works, it seemed almost a program, a program of grandeur and of war.

The war came, at last, for them! As a man, D'Annunzio fought it with courage and endurance. But that is not the point; tens of thousands of humble Italians did as much. He who failed—and was bound to fail—was the poet and his imagination. He, before the Nationalists, had extolled slaughter and bloodshed. (One can not deny that sadism is one of the mainsprings of his poetic sensuality.) With the Nationalists he had sung "the war, beautiful and joyous" such as they had copied her from the official theorists of Hohenzollern Germany. But when the tragedy actually came, with its horrors but also with its sacrifices, with its bloodshed but also with its suffering humanity, its significance was beyond his barren artistry. He described it with noisy rhetoric, but he failed to see what, in the brutality of the war, was yet its redeeming point; for instance, the beauty of that stand on the Piave which was begun even before the General Headquarters gave out the orders for it: a sort of instinct of the Italian soldiers who felt that, after the retreat of Caporetto, here they must stand, here they must die, if they did not want to see

Prussians, Austrians and Hungarians invade their native soil.

It was beautiful because it was human. And because human, incomprehensible to him.

After the war, came, a few months later, the Fiume expedition. Conceived of and prepared by others, D'Annunzio only joined it at the last moment. But one must say that Fiume soon became his thing—something entirely different from what the Italians had, until then, imagined it to be.

For many Italians, irritated as they were by the difficulties which they attributed to the blindness of the Allies, Fiume had become something like the symbol of victory. Extremes were soon reached: the loss of Fiume meant victory impaired. To this state of mind contributed that part of the press which was influenced by the vaguely nationalistic elements of the government, such as Baron Sonnino. The latter's error—his good faith being unquestionable—can only be explained by the lack of elasticity in his intelligence. If victory brings any advantage at all, it can lie only in the subjective feeling of victoriousness. And Italians should have had that more than any other Allies since they alone had seen the war—the war that had cost them five hundred thousand dead—ending in the final destruction of their traditional enemy, Austria-Hungary. But Sonnino—as I have already shown[1]—had never seen in the war what Mazzini's prophetic genius had foretold half a century earlier: the liberation and the independence of the Slav races; that is why the complete annihilation of Austria was almost disillusion to him. He wanted Austria beaten, certainly, but to a certain extent only. On the other hand, Fiume was undeniably Italian. And the prestige of the Fiume formula in Italy came from this: that those who, like Bissolati and myself, wanted to build up a new force of

[1]See chapter on Sonnino.

leadership for our country by making Italy the champion and generous befriender of the nations which were coming to life on her Eastern frontiers, agreed with Sonnino's disciples in wanting Fiume Italian. Sonnino's disciples, however sincere in their patriotism, were not so confident of Italy's strength, nor so optimistic as we were, and—instead of adhering to our policy which was the application of Mazzini's principles—they claimed they could safeguard national interests by the mean *divide et impera* that had symbolized the base hand-to-mouth policy of old Austria.

As a matter of fact, Fiume was nothing but a tool for D'Annunzio; just as the most conflicting ideas of contemporary writers had—all—been adopted by him as motives for his verse. Even more, Fiume became his stage.

There was nothing very surprising really in the fact that the new generations, for whom the war—as with everybody everywhere—had been a cause of intellectual setback, were dazzled by the artificial colors of the staging and mistook it all for an epic reality.

In D'Annunzio's Fiume are to be found the germs of all the elements which afterward constituted Fascism in Italy, or, to put it better, Fascism as it was in its early years when there were still people who hoped some national good might come of it. First of all, the decadent elements who, already before the war, had found themselves in D'Annunzio's verse: men thirsting for self-indulgence, spirits of adventure and conquest. Beside them, coarser but less decadent, all those who had won their stripes during the war, who had risked their life, and who found it hard to go back to their humble ill-paid jobs. (One might note that not a few of the revolutions in ancient Rome were the unwholesome performances of legionaries back at home from some distant warfare.)

Last but not least, a great many adolescent youths of the

middle classes, who during four long years had heard about the war, at seventeen or eighteen, found a small but picturesque one within their reach.

As ever and everywhere youths of ideals and of abnegation also took part in the adventure. But all these were more or less quickly disgusted with it and left. I have seen the diary of one of them—a man to-day who might, in a free Italy, render great service to his country. It is tragical to see how first he goes on believing in the face of the doubts which assail him; how, little by little, disgust and disillusionment seize him; and how he finally leaves Fiume after a conversation with D'Annunzio who vainly tried his tricks of allurement on him once more.

And, finally, to come to the population of Fiume itself. It was, it is, deeply Italian in the intensity of its municipal loves and hatreds. Thus, at first, there was an enthusiastic welcome for an expedition which had sworn to protect it from all Slav danger. When it was understood that the Italian and municipal interests of Fiume could be safeguarded by a formula—mine—that established the Italian character of the town by drawing it up into an independent city, linked to Italy, but basing its economic future on a working of the harbor entrusted to an Italo-Yugo-Slav-Fumian commission, the realization of my scheme was ardently, if secretly, desired. But too late; every one was bound by the power which had on all sides been surrendered into the hands of D'Annunzio. And then came to pass what happened on a bigger scale later on in Italy: two languages came to be spoken, one in secret, showing that it had become clear at last to everybody who were the real defenders of Fiume; the other for the stage, inflated and rhetorical, which went on exalting in high-flown words what one cursed in the secret of the most intimate conversations. The result was not only that Fiume, whose prosperity could be saved—

like that of Trieste, for that matter—only by a friendly understanding with the Slav hinterland, became, from an economic standpoint, the miserable wreck she is to-day, with her empty harbor and her grass-grown streets; but also that the moral standards of its inhabitants were lowered, obliged as they were, under a reign of terror, not only to hide their feelings, but also to praise and worship those very idols with which, after a short fit of misguided exaltation, they had soon come to be so deeply disgusted.

The saddest side of all that was, as I have said, the repetition in Italy of this particular form of lowering of moral character. Even as on the Fiume stage, all the episodic findings which the turbid fancy of D'Annunzio had come upon, repeated themselves in Italy: the dialogue between the Chief and the Crowd; the high-sounding questions: "Whose the future?" "Whose Fiume?" "Whose Italy?" to which the Crowd, on its knees, answered: "Ours!" And also all the pompous words, the bombastic style, which would, at one time, have made all Italians laugh.

An Italian critic, Thovez, once published a book to prove that D'Annunzio had plagiarized entire pages from the works of foreign writers. D'Annunzio's poetical imagery—at least the sensuous kind—is so rich that Thovez's accusation probably did not trouble him.

He has certainly been himself the victim of the most complete plagiarism ever seen. For the Fascist conquest of Italy has been the most literal and least original copy imaginable of what was for D'Annunzio his most tumultuous unwritten poem, the Fiume adventure.

One may, without exaggeration, say that it is not Italy which has annexed Fiume, but that it is D'Annunzio's Fiume which has annexed Italy—for the time being.

## XXX

### Facta
### or
### The Immediate Origins of Fascism

WHEN Dante's first steps in the *Inferno* had led him across the wretched herd of the cowards *che mai non fur vivi* (who never were alive), Virgil admonished him: *"Non ragioniam di lor!"* (It is not worth while mentioning them.)

Even did I wish to disregard the poet's warning, I should with difficulty find anything to say of the poor and, truth to tell pitiable, little provincial lawyer who happened to be prime minister of Italy from February, 1922, till October of the same year, when the "March on Rome" took place. With Signor Facta the limit had been reached of the possibility that avers itself in all parliamentary régimes, of a nonentity assuming power for a few months, while the leading actors arrange their troupe as they please and stage their reentry. . . . I had been his colleague in a Cabinet in which he was finance minister; I saw him at least twice a week at the King's Sunday audiences and at the Cabinet meetings, for a long series of months, but not the vaguest memory have I kept, either of a sentence, or of a remark of any kind, from this obliging little middle-class gentleman, always smiling, and nodding, and approving. Just because he was the archtype of those who *mai non fur vivi* was he chosen to preside over a provisional Ministry that ought soon to have given way to a Giolitti Cabinet, thought some; to a Cabinet of All the Talents, thought others.

Events proved that such games are not always safe.

Everybody knows what happened. The Fascists, convinced of the irremediable weakness of Facta, met in a Congress at Naples. It was, in reality, the rally of their legions. On October twenty-fourth their leader, Mussolini, left them and hastened to Milan. On October twenty-seventh the Fascists told Facta he must resign, and on the evening of that day he tendered his resignation to the King. During the night of the twenty-seventh was organized the "March on Rome," Mussolini remaining in Milan. The outgoing Cabinet, assembled that same night, decided on resistance to the resignation not of Facta, but of three Ministers, Amendola, Alessio, Taddei. It was decided to proclaim martial law. On the morning of October twenty-eighth Facta brought the decree of martial law to the King to be signed, but came back to the Ministers still assembled in council, with the decree unsigned. The Ministers insisted that martial law was necessary and that Facta must go to the King again to have the decree signed. Facta went to the King again, but once more came back with the decree unsigned. The public learned that the martial law was not going to be enforced and the Fascists naturally increased in number at once. They increased so rapidly that, on the evening of October twenty-ninth, Mussolini who had not left Milan was asked to come to Rome to form a Cabinet.

Did Facta, empty shadow though he was, hide an idea of any kind behind his vacillating attitude? Not one historian of that period deals with the Facta element, so unimportant did the man appear.

Sturzo in his book, *Italy and Fascism*[1] which seems more the work of a philosophic historian than of a political leader, writes: "The position of the Facta Cabinet [in October

[1]London, 1926, pages 115-120.

1922] was not only insecure but had become untenable, and the Prime Minister was only awaiting at the reopening of the Chamber to tender his resignation—at least, so rumor said. Facta secretly worked for the return of Giolitti, but his efforts bore no fruit."

The fact that the King had refused to sign the decree proclaiming martial law, Sturzo ascribes to "the fear that worse might befall, the hope of a possible understanding, the weak and ambiguous position of the Cabinet which, after having resigned, found itself without authority, and the advice of certain army chiefs."

I, for my part, believe that Facta's responsibilities are greater than has ever been said. And, in anticipation of a final historical study of this *opera fantastica e da poco durare*—as the Papacy defined a kind of Fascist fit of the fourteenth century, the mad undertaking of Cola di Rienzi—I think it my duty to record here simply as documentary evidence for future history, what, after 1922, Giolitti, and Senator Taddei, Minister for the Interior in the Facta Cabinet, told me in confidence.

Facta having been known all his life simply as "Giolitti's friend," it was natural that a general belief—which Sturzo apparently shares in his book—should prevail that, in those days of crisis, Facta worked for the return of his old chief and patron.

When, with the respect I owed to his years, I told Giolitti my surprise that he had not, in the autumn of 1922, felt it his duty to come to Rome and seize power, the answer I received was: he admitted that he had probably been wrong; but the difficulties and obstacles and objections of every kind which Facta raised to prevent him from leaving his country place at Cavour, were infinite and inexhaustible. Once, when his departure for Rome from Cavour had been decided on,—so Giolitti went on to say,—Facta even went

so far as to wire that floods had rendered the journey dangerous. Giolitti added that, in his opinion, poor Facta had been taken in by confidential overtures of the Fascists who had dazzled him with promises of a new Cabinet in which he would remain prime minister with Mussolini and other Fascist colleagues. Indeed, when on October twenty-eighth he was advised by one of the leaders of his majority to withdraw his resignation in order to be stronger, he did nothing of the sort; and, although he had resigned, he went on negotiating with the Fascists. To remain *démissionnaire* seemed to him to be putting himself in better posture for the new situation.

"How could a man, who seemed so devoted to you, have come to play you false?"

And Giolitti answered: "He was not [he spoke of him in the past tense, as if he were dead already], he was not a bad man; but vanity had swollen the head of certain people around him; and he fell in with the suggestions that day and night were made around him, to make his way without me and against me. Poor fellow!"

On the other hand, Senator Taddei, who often spoke to me of those events, had ended by adopting an opinion that he had discarded at the beginning. Gathering a hundred little symptoms which had at first seemed irrelevant, Taddei had acquired the conviction that Facta, contrary to the positive injunctions of the Cabinet, had, on the two occasions he went to the King on the twenty-eighth, advised the latter not to sign the decree for martial law he was submitting to him, alleging the recent resignation of his Cabinet, resignation that he was himself maintaining.

I was away from Italy at the time and therefore expressly limit myself to stating the two testimonies I received, which help to throw a little more light on the legend of the "March on Rome."

## XXXI

### Mussolini
### or
### The Transformations of Fascism

MANY among those who have suffered too much make one solid whole of Fascism, and everything that called itself Fascist from the very first moment the movement began is reckoned by them as one of the causes of the present stifling of Italian life and thought.

Among foreigners, all those who love freedom echo them.

Truth is somewhat different. The beginnings of what became Fascism were not lacking in a certain idealistic passion for renovation; a factor all the more desirable in a country where the masses—except for those which had enrolled in Socialism—did not take in the management of national life the hundredth part of the interest they used to take in their municipal contentions. That was the penalty for centuries of history in which nothing had been free and Italian but the life of the communes.

After the four years of the war, the thousands of soldiers home from the trenches felt, as perhaps never before, a desire finally to take part in the management of their country. The Catholic masses gave a practical turn to this longing by the foundation of the Popular Party (Christian democracy); among the more individualistic elements, those imbued with the remnants of the old Italian instincts of rebellion—a consequence of past servitude—fell in with the fomenters of chaotic revolutionary movements that had

all the disadvantages of revolution without its strength; those who became the Fascists were just as unruly, but could not join with them, nor with the old Socialist organizations, for they did not want to forget the sufferings and the glories of the war.

The Fascist program, such as it was drawn up in 1919, was in reality an ill-digested compound of commonplaces and of childishness. But it could hardly have been otherwise; the groups it was drawn up for constituted but a romantic movement without the least political experience or tradition; it was substantiated solely by the Futurism that Marinetti had preached during the previous fifteen years, and Syndicalism as it was developed from Sorel's theories exaggerated by their passage across the Alps.

Unfortunately, the Fascist movement, generous as it wished to be in the beginning, did not have the luck to find either the men or the occasions that might have made it useful, as it otherwise could have been. Any current can, if it is only fresh and sincere.

Its 1919 program is the proof of the political poverty of the man who looked like their leader, Mussolini, and who wrote it. In the light of Mussolini's subsequent attitudes, it is curious to uncover this document:

"1. A National Constituent Assembly, as the Italian section of the International Constituent Assembly of Peoples, to proceed to a radical transformation of the political and economic bases of community life.

"2. Proclamation of the Italian Republic. Decentralization of the executive power; autonomous administration of regions and communes by means of their own legislative organs. Sovereignty of the people, exercised through a universal, equal and direct franchise of citizens of both sexes, the people to reserve the initiative of referendum and veto.

"3. Abolition of the Senate. Abolition of the political

police. Magistrate elected independently of the executive power.

"4. Abolition of all titles of nobility and of all orders of knighthood.

"5. Abolition of compulsory service.

"6. Liberty of opinion and of conscience, of religion, of associations, of the press.

"7. An educational system of schools, general and professional, open to all.

"8. The maximum of attention to social hygiene.

"9. Dissolution of industrial and financial limited companies. Suppression of every kind of speculation, of banks and of stock exchanges.

"10. Census and taxation of private wealth. Confiscation of unproductive revenues.

"11. Prohibition of labor for children under sixteen years of age. Eight-hour day.

"12. Reorganization of production on a cooperative basis and direct sharing of all the workers in the profit.

"13. Abolition of secret diplomacy.

"14. International policy opened to, and inspired by, the solidarity of peoples and their independence in a confederation of states."

A year later, the same demagogy went on; during the occupation of the factories,[1] Mussolini wrote in his paper, *Il Popolo d'Italia:* "The workers must not surrender without obtaining guarantees."

Yet, in spite of the fact that no public man has ever contradicted himself more frequently or more rapidly than the leader of Fascism, I do not, for my part, believe that it was due to premeditation on his part that Fascism which had started as a revolutionary and syndicalist ferment, soon transformed itself into a tool of reaction.

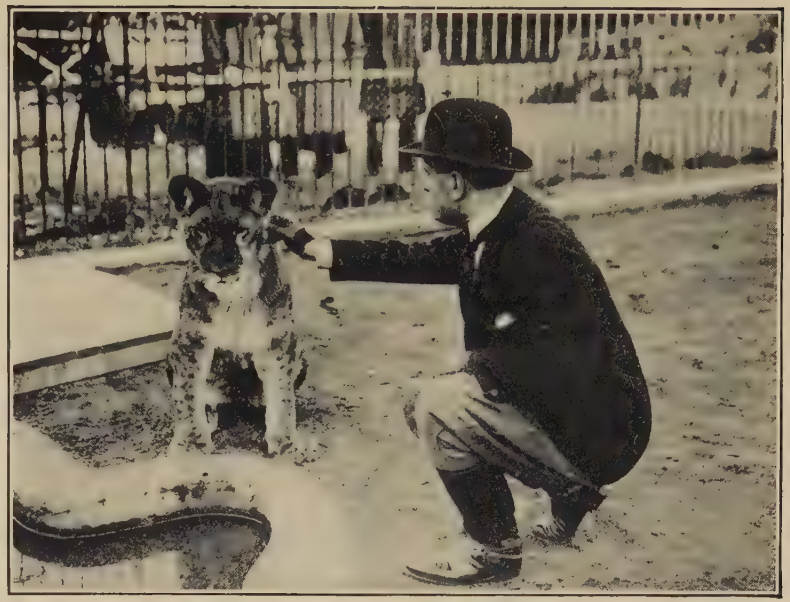
Most of those original Fascists considered themselves as disciples of Sorel and accentuators of his theory of violence. But another group in Italy claimed descent

[1]See chapter on Giolitti.

from Sorel; only it had chosen a different kind of violence, the kind preached in France by the monarchist Maurras. It was by applying and copying the theories of this Frenchman that they founded Italian nationalism. Both groups, sharing in common the "ideas" they had taken from Sorel, felt kindred and, while disliking each other, facilitated the birth of a new Fascism, with its double face of conservatism and subversion.

On the other hand, the great industrials and landowners of Lombardy, Emilia and Tuscany did not wait for the Nationalist-Fascist amalgamation in order to decide to get hold of the regional Fascist organizations. The lack of a precise political and moral program,—Mussolini's fourteen articles had fallen flat,—the fact that most of the enthusiastic rank and file of Fascism boasted of impersonating "dynamic action" and not doctrinally defined principles, and above all, the fact that the Fascist groups were generally made up of people of quick temperament but of slow intelligence, made it possible for them to accept the suggestions of the landowners and of the industrials. They began a war against a Bolshevik danger that did not exist, without ever realizing that, from the free groups that they had been, they were turning into policemen.

In reality, the industrials only pretended they were fighting Bolshevism because the word and the thing were hateful to the immense majority of Italians. But they knew the danger was over, granted it had ever existed. Mussolini himself had written in the *Popolo d'Italia* (July, 1921): "To say that a Bolshevist danger still exists in Italy means taking base fears for reality. Bolshevism is overthrown." Under the cloak of combating Bolshevism, the industrials were up against the Socialist, or socializing, spirit of reform which had been gradually developing in the first twenty years of this century, thanks to what has been a real,



*Courtesy, Henry Holt and Company*

Il Duce — the "movie" actor

though tacit, cooperation between Giolitti and the moderate Socialists.

Mussolini probably did not like this tendency of the groups whose nominal leader he was. He proved it when he tried at first to arrange a coalition government of moderate Socialists, Christian Democrats (Popolari) and Fascists; and, a little later, when he protested against Fascism, as being tyrannical and devoted to the furthering of private interests. But he was their leader—and therefore obliged to follow them.

When, after Fascism had come to power, events more perhaps than a preconceived will created in Italy a situation that made the Fascists look like an army camped in the midst of a hostile disarmed nation (the suppression of free elections is the proof of this), the evolution became even faster; and from a policy of violence, one came to a police State.

One day, when passions and hatreds will have died down, it will perhaps be recognized that all this sanguinary brutality came to pass not because of an innate mania for domination, as was the case with Bonaparte, but because of a pathetic disproportion between the legend that had been woven around a person promoted to the rank of myth and the actual capacity of this same person. I am fairly tempted to believe that when Mussolini came to power with the hazy encyclopedic knowledge that every newspaper man has, he was in good faith convinced that all the problems about which he had so glibly decided in his editorials, could easily be solved. When he realized the truth about things and about himself, he was already a slave of the myth artificially created around him. Probably, Cola di Rienzi and Masaniello, analogous types of demagogical dictators born of the whims of a drunken rabble, went through the same fits of elation and of depression.

When comedy turned to tragedy, one had to stay, cost

what it might. Hence the complete transformation of the old romantic and revolutionary Fascism into an exact copy of the régime that shows the greatest similarity with the Fascist one: that of France under Napoleon III. Almost all the laws and new ideas of Fascism are taken from that period. Louis-Napoleon reduced Parliament to impotence, and so did Fascism. The *décret-loi* of March 25, 1852, made the prefects omnipotent, destroying all local autonomy, and so did Fascism. In Bonapartistic France the appointment of the *maires* was entrusted (1855) to the prefects, and so under Fascism. Napoleon III got rid of republican magistrates, and a Fascist law authorizes the government to dismiss any judge who refuses to obey. The treatment of the university professors, the treatment of the press, have their prototype in French laws of that period. Identical is the psychology of the two governments: the silence of the nation is broken, as frequently as possible, by pageants, exhibitions, sporting events, and all things to appeal to uncritical imagination, while the intelligence must be kept inactive. The boasting, the same: "For a long time," said the second Bonaparte in 1852, "society has been like an inverted pyramid resting on its apex. I have put the pyramid on its basis." Mussolini repeated the formula.

The only novelty in Italy, the only material remnant of the old Fascism, is the maintenance of Fascist militia, now made up of young men of middle and lower-middle classes who find there, some, a satisfaction for their childish war imagination; others, a chance for giving vent to their instincts with impunity; all, a job that enables them to live without excessive toiling in a country where, on account of over-population, the struggle for life is particularly hard. Their strength lies in that they know the hatred, hidden but burning, around them, and that they can not indulge in relaxing their grip.

Nothing strange that, confronted by increasing social and economic difficulties, foreigners in America and in Europe have looked with interest at the Fascist experiment, wondering whether it could not be a new remedy.

Had they only read a little of the past—simply the newspapers of the French Second Empire—they would have discovered that there is nothing new in the Italian régime; or that, if there is anything new, that something should worry them, for it is nothing but the remnant of the revolutionary violence of the old Fascism that has not quite died down yet under its veneer of policing zeal.

Apart from this potential leaven of revolutionary violence, the Fascism now in power is a homogeneous thing in which the only opinion admitted is the official one of the moment. The most revealing trait of this situation is that, whereas forty million disarmed men are intellectually and morally prisoners, the jailers in their turn are prisoners—prisoners of the fear that it might not last—that the bluff be discovered—that it might no longer suffice to speak of the Roman Empire and to promise glory and prosperity for to-morrow.

In spite of all the sorrows and the shame, I believe however that even this period of police despotism—rendered worse than its papal and Habsburg precedents by the blasphemous use of the name of Italy as the exclusive property of a faction—will in the end be useful to the development of the nation, but in a manner quite different from that admitted in conservative circles. It would be unfair to forget that while the English and French have behind them a series of generations who lived in freedom, Italians had to suffer foreign domination in the north and in the south, clerical corruption and compression in Rome, and that the miracle of the Risorgimento was the work of an heroic minority of Liberals from the aristocracy and the

middle classes, who joyfully, and by the thousand, gave their lives to the Austrian scaffolds and the Austrian prisons. The masses could not help admiring those men; but, as a whole, looked on at the struggle as if it were not the fate of Italy that was at stake. Now, for the first time, Fascism has been felt as an intolerable yoke by the intellectual minority and by the millions of peasants in the fields as well. For the first time, under the death silence of Italian life, one may detect the symptoms of a universal solidarity in the name of freedom. When this silent movement of the spirits will end by asserting itself and create a true democracy where everybody will have experienced what the loss of liberty means—all the sufferings of the Fascist period will not have been in vain.

It will then be realized that the drawbacks of freedom are preferable to submitting or giving oneself up to any kind of guardianship, be it mad and bloody, or "enlightened" and paternal. Already at the beginning of the sixteenth century, at the agony of the old Italian municipal liberties, our keenest political thinker, Machiavelli, answered thus[1] to those who complained of the disorders that freedom brings in its train: "I say that those who condemn the struggle between the patricians and the plebeians blame the things which were the first cause of the freedom of Rome; that they pay more attention to the noise and shouting which came from these struggles than to their beneficial results; that they fail to appreciate how it happens that there are two dispositions in every state—that of the aristocracy and that of the people; and how all laws enacted in favor of liberty are the product of this discord. . . ."

[1]Machiavelli, *Deche,* I, 4.

## XXXII

### Pius XI
### or
### The Roman Church and Fascism

IT WAS in September, 1870, that the head of the Roman Catholic Church was deprived by force of his last possession, Rome.

Pius IX, who was then pope, had already excommunicated the Italian King and the Italian Government when, ten years earlier, in 1860, they had occupied all the Pontifical States with the exception of Rome, where Napoleon II had sent a French garrison, thus buying the support of the French Catholics.

With the long peaceful years which followed one another in Italy, with the steady progress made in all fields by democratic Italy, and the position that she—the last comer—had achieved among the Great Powers, the excommunications fulminated by Pius IX sank into oblivion. They had gone the way of the *donatio Constantini,* the document that for centuries had been quoted as the juridical basis of the Papal States, the deed by which Constantine, it was asserted, had left Rome and Italy to Pope Sylvester before he went to settle at Constantinople. Nowadays, even Catholic historians admit that the document was a pious forgery perpetrated by some ingenious monk; they admit it, although they do not care very much to lay stress on their admission.

But, while leaving the excommunications in the background, neither the first three successors of Pius IX, Leo

XIII, Pius X and Benedict XV, nor the present Pope Pius XI, had ever formally admitted that they could do without a territorial sovereign State.

In reality, a situation had been created which seemed till yesterday, to most European statesmen, the embodiment of practical wisdom. The popes declared in an encyclical, every two or three years, that the state of things created for them in Rome by the Italian Government was "intolerable"; the Italian Government took care not to make any answer. On the following day—as on the previous—confidential agents from the Vatican came and saw Italian officials—and sometimes the Italian minister himself, as more than once happened to me—and quietly and successfully arranged all the questions concerning, for instance, those very Italian missionaries and bishops abroad, whose rallying to Italy is now quoted as if it were something new, and as one of the advantages the Italian Kingdom will reap from the Lateran agreements.

I only know of one case and passing moment when these protests really risked harming Italy. It was when, in 1881-82, Leo XIII, irritated or frightened by some silly anti-clerical demonstrations in the streets of Rome, secretly appealed to the Austrian Emperor for a shelter in Trento, then an Austrian province, with the hope of preaching a crusade against Liberal Italy from a safe Austrian refuge. Yes, Leo XIII who, in other fields, had appeared a far-seeing spirit, had thought it possible to form an alliance of Catholic powers that would, through military force, have reinstated a pontifical State in Italy. I heard of this phase of papal diplomacy in 1910, from Count Aehrenthal, during the secret conversations I had with him about the Austro-Italian differences.[1] Answering bitter truths he had been obliged to hear from me, he told me of the Pope's

[1]See chapter on Aehrenthal.

attempt, and the fact that Franz Joseph had thrown quite a cold shower on Leo's dreams. I confess that, then, I had been rather inclined to think that Aehrenthal had exaggerated his master's Italian merits. But the documents I came to see after the destruction of the Austrian Monarchy have proved that the last servant of the Habsburgs had told me the plainest truth. In a conversation with a secret envoy from the Emperor, Leo XIII had gone as far as this: "It is necessary," he had said, and the envoy wrote to Franz Joseph, "that the Pontiff leave Rome and that he return through the action of the Catholic sovereigns, who must understand the solidarity of their cause with mine."

Benedict XV, who has probably been the most intelligent of modern popes, seems to have held quite opposite views: at least, he kept the most discouraging silence to the offers the Central Empires proffered him, during the World War, for the reconstitution of a small Pontifical State (Erzberger, then leader of the German Catholic Center, wrote of a *Miniaturgebiet)*.[1] I have reasons to believe that the essential aim of Benedict during the war was the maintenance of the Law of Guarantees, which had in practise worked out so well since 1871, but backed by an Italian Christian democracy strong enough to assume power in Italy some day or, at any rate, to withstand any possible, if improbable, intolerance of liberal governments. To him, the idea of the sovereignty over the Vatican palaces was only a necessary accessory. Of course only this accessory could have formed the basis of the confidential conversations which in 1919 he authorized prelates of the Roman Catholic Curia to have with Prime Minister Orlando

[1]The territorial clauses schemed by Erzberger were similar to what was concluded in 1929 with the Lateran Treaties; but Erzberger, an enemy during the war, spoke of 500 million lire to be given by Italy in case of an Italian defeat, while the Fascist régime gave, ten years after victory, 1750 million lire.

and his successor Nitti. With both, the tentative demands from the Vatican side were incomparably more moderate than the terms imposed in 1929 on the Fascist Government. Never was even an allusion ventured with Orlando and Nitti to any Concordat, and even less to any practical reestablishment of Canon Law in Italian civil life.

When, in June, 1920, the Nitti Cabinet resigned and Giolitti came into power again, with myself as foreign minister, he took cognizance of the confidential negotiations of his predecessor, with whom I had been as under-secretary of State for foreign affairs, and after a few days of thought he said to me: "Nitti has acted with prudence, but I belong to the old school; I believe that the best thing for Church and State in Italy is to be like two parallel lines which never cross each other, never diverge, but never meet."

For my part, I quite agreed. Out of personal experience, I was even convinced that any change might be disadvantageous for my country in that very field where amateur diplomats have always imagined that Italy's power might increase through a conciliation: I mean the Missions in the Levant and in Africa.

Serious French writers, probably inspired more by patriotic fear than by an objective study of the situation, wrote, after the conclusion of the Lateran Treaties on February 11, 1929, that "Italy gained what she had dreamed of for the last fifty years: to take Austria's place as protectress of Catholicism in Central Europe and in the Balkans." This sort of French preoccupation is simply one of the recurring proofs that, in certain Paris traditional circles, ideas and judgments are still frequently molded on notions of the past.

First of all, I deny with serene certainty that Italy—I mean free Italy—ever thought of taking over Austria's Catholic supremacy in the Balkans. On the contrary, I

always felt that if the "Catholic" character of the Austrian Oriental policy seemed no impediment for diplomatic Austria, it was simply because the Ballplatz and the Hofburg were no longer a living entity: they could only use weapons of the past. But Italy was for us—and will be again—a great living force of the future. And what do we see in new Europe? In Czechoslovakia, the strongest of the new States created after victory, a "national" and anti-Roman current begins to be felt even among her Catholic communities; in a lesser degree, the same tendency may be detected in Croatia, where the *Obzor* dared, in 1929, to proclaim: "The Vatican is our enemy." Rumania and Bulgaria are Orthodox countries where all attempts to create a movement toward a union with the Roman Church have always proved vain.

Only in Hungary was the agreement between the Vatican and the Fascist Government viewed with favor, which is a proof of what I said—because as long as the noble and brave Hungarian nation remains under the control of a group of aristocratic families who, under cover of a noisy patriotism, think only of their landlordly privileges, Hungary will remain, like old Austria, a thing of the past.

We may leave aside as irrelevant for permanent history the reasons which have led the Fascist Government to offer to the pope much more than German Catholics had schemed for in case of an Austro-German victory; Fascism is obliged to stage every year some novelty, to stun the Italians. What is historically worth finding out is by what argument Pius XI was prompted to the momentous change.

Facts being more eloquent than political formulæ, nobody can deny that the popes enjoyed in Italy, and in the world, since the loss of temporal power in 1870, a moral prestige and a freedom such as they had never had in a formally more Catholic Europe.

Before 1870, the Church had suffered enormously in Italy from the fact that she had identified herself with the Bourbon and Austrian tyrants who were keeping my country enslaved; just as, before the French Revolution, she looked on the verge of death in France, in spite of her great material possessions and of her official prestige.

When Cavour created a free united Italy and gave as a basis for her relations with the Church his famous formula: *Free Church in a free State,* he foresaw that, as he wrote, "as soon as the Church will have tasted of Liberty she will feel herself rejuvenated by this healthful and strengthening régime." Old Visconti-Venosta who had married Cavour's niece, used to tell me that, in his last days, Cavour more than once repeated with one of those laughs that hid the deep seriousness of his sovereign thought:—"Who knows? Perhaps the Church will end by canonizing me." . . .

Cavour's canonization does not seem near. But his prophecy was fulfilled because the Church only appeared again as one of the leading moral forces in the world after she had lost all temporal power, and she lived in a régime of common liberty.

Not only were the "prisoner" popes asked as arbiters in more than one diplomatic controversy, but the Church owed the end of her worst humiliation to the situation Liberal Italy had made for her. This burning humiliation was maintenance of the right of veto against the election of some pope, used by certain Powers in the Conclave, in spite of all the rules enforced to guard the independence of the cardinals. The Church had only succeeded in suppressing the right of veto during the last period of the "prisoner" Pope. I should not be surprised if some Foreign Offices were already thinking of some scheme for the creation of an *Ersatz* of the old veto.

It would be difficult not to admit that some elements of the Church must have felt unholy joy at the idea that hated Cavourian Italy had at last been defeated. Has not one of the most important Catholic reviews dared to write that the Lateran Treaties have destroyed the traditions of "the Risorgimento, this gigantic Fiume adventure"? But in a more serene atmosphere it seems more probable that what decided the Vatican was not so much the offer of a small territory. The Concordat—which only the present régime could have offered, as Pius XI himself rightly said—was the main reason, or excuse.

But there never is, in politics, a decision that springs from a single cause; politics are life, and life is but a resultant of forces often opposed. Let us, then, examine the reasons. One is generally afraid to touch upon, lest one should appear to fall into that petty anti-clerical style so devoid of any sense of history.

One must, however, have the courage to admit that the enormous "indemnity" paid by the Italian State to the Vatican has played a certain part in the decisions taken by the latter; not, of course, in the sense of a vulgar desire for money, but only because Italian money would have enabled the Vatican to maintain toward the Anglo-Saxon and American world a more independent attitude. Since the war, the Holy See barely received any financial supplies from France, from Germany, from Austria. Italy had never given a cent. Everything came from England and from America; but with their money came increased pressure for a kind of proportional representation. Now, the Italian personnel which had, for centuries, given all the popes,[1] which had been used to having the majority of cardinal's hats, which

[1]The last non-Italian pope was Adrian VI, from Utrecht, Netherlands, elected in 1522, who died in 1523. He had succeeded Leo X and was followed by another Medici, Clement VII.

has the greatest majority of nunciatures, did not like to be dispossessed. Furthermore, it believed itself to be the most apt to be at the helm of the Church; but to withstand the pressure from England and especially from the United States, it needed an independent financial basis. The seventeen hundred and fifty million lire that the Italian rate-payers have been forced to find for the Pope give the permanent personnel of the Curia a new strength to resist those indiscreet American and British Catholics who hold that the Church has need of new blood.

Another reason might be found in the difficulties there were in going on rejecting the ever more advantageous offers made by a régime which hoped to find in a conciliation a sort of moral prestige of which they badly felt the need. Fascism being what it is, the sudden reversals of the most extreme attitudes of its chief being notorious, one may suppose that, at the Vatican, they may have thought it dangerous to run the risk of seeing the feigned religious manifestations of the newcomers change into acts of anti-clerical violence of which the previous Liberal Italian Government would never have been capable.

The personality of Pope Pius XI holds in itself, however, the deep psychological motives that drove him to conclude the agreement with the Fascist Government. A common mistrust is frequently a stronger link than a common love; the Catholicism of Piux XI and the Fascist leaders had in common the same hatred of political liberty. I have said—the Catholicism of Pius XI. His conceptions, indeed, constitute a radical departure from the political thought of his predecessor.

Benedict XV, faced as he had been with the sad results which the Church had reaped from Pius X's medieval policy, had left to Catholic laity the widest possible

*Photo from Ewing Galloway, New York*

A recent photograph of the Pope taken in his studio in the Vatican

autonomy in the social and political fields. He put his trust in the beneficent influence of liberty. Breaking with all the Vatican traditions, he found the courage to allow the foundation, in Italy, of the Popular Party whose aim, under Sturzo's leadership, was to associate the Church with a progressive social action. For all its errors—excusable in a troubled period, and in view of its tumultuous origin—the Popular Party might have become an important element of sincerity and of maturity in Italy, representing as it did currents that will probably never disappear from the country. For the popes, it might have represented the real conciliation; in no way compromising the Vatican, declaring itself independent from it, it would have stood for a free apology of Christian thought.

But all that could not be crystallized in protocols.

And the new Pope was not only, like Pius X, hostile to the ideas of Liberty; he was also a sort of scholar, grown up among libraries and archives, afraid of life, and he believed that some good treaty, drawn up in the traditional form, was better. To those who pointed out to him that it was dangerous to deal with demagogues he answered: "I know, but at least they do not believe in the fetishes of Liberalism."

That was the link.

One can not deny that, in the general administration of the Church, even outside Italy, Pius XI has at least the merit of the continuity of his own idea. That idea is to take up again the policy of the disciplinarian unity of the Church which was pursued by Pius X, in order to come to what might be termed the administrative unity of the Church. Whence, throughout the world, the juridical and actual centralization, in the person of the pope, of all the questions that had always been left to the congregations or

to the bishops. Whence, in Italy as in any other country, the tendency to eliminate the democratic currents of the Catholic parties, and to substitute for them the rigid frame of the traditional sacerdotal structures. If Pius XI has destroyed the Popular Party in Italy, he has, in Germany, obtained that the Catholic Center should give up their alliance with the Socialists and replace it by an alliance with the nationalistic and militaristic Right, in order to have a bill passed favoring the denominational schools; he has, in Spain, striven against the Christian democratic movement in Catalonia, and especially against its republican character; he has, in Belgium, imposed the *Union Catholique,* sacrificing to the conservative elements the claims of the democrats from Flanders. He has, it is true, condemned, in France, the *Action Française* which carried on a campaign for the restoration of the Monarchy; but this condemnation has been reduced to a noisy episode of slight political importance and of no doctrinal importance at all, since the Pope has never found the courage to publish the encyclical which had been announced and which was to refute the doctrines of nationalistic hatred of the *Action Française* and proclaim in their stead a Catholic system of international morality. The encyclical, although it had been prepared by learned priests, has never been published.[1] Pius XI probably never dared to run the risk of displeasing the governments with which he has made his most important treaties and which live exclusively by trading on national hatred.

This policy of mistrust of liberty, this desire to centralize around the pope all the forces of Catholic laity, have obliged Pius XI to want for the pontiff an even more

[1]One can, at liberty, deny that the encyclical had been prepared. This book has been written almost entirely in Belgium; and I know where and how the document was drawn up by a committee of theologians and jurists; as also the name of the Belgian Jesuit who was to write the text of it.

definite personal power and a figure even more sublimated, to wish that the obedience to the moral law dictated by the Church be henceforth merged into a sort of pontifical cult. Even if no poor personal vanity has come into play, the dangerous emphasis was inevitable, granted the policy of the present Pope: one had to put a unity of feeling in the place of the fruitful battles for unity of thought within the Church, which one had tried to suppress. Already we see in France—autocrats always find flatterers—the dangerous formation of the "Pope's Volunteers" who preach a new gospel of passive obedience, even in all those matters where the most orthodox tradition has always allowed the most complete freedom of criticism and discussion. Antithetical in its intentions, but not in the results achieved, this French movement is the counterpart of the Catholic affectation, in Italy, of the Fascist Party which proclaims its respect for the Church "for She is useful to Italian prestige." On both sides of the Alps, indeed, one sole result: decadence of a true and active religious spirit.

In Italy, even the blindest must admit it: the live forces of the religious organizations having been destroyed, the Popular Party dissolved, Sturzo exiled, Sturzo the man who had devoted his life to giving a new right of citizenship to religious spirit in Italian public life, the Pope, who had thought he had become all-powerful, finds himself alone as soon as the Fascist leaders put the alternative to him, either of submission or of open warfare. Had he trusted to freedom, he might have taken up the gauntlet. Alone, he must needs accept compromise after compromise, humiliation after humiliation.

On the morrow of the signature of the Lateran Treaties, Pius XI, full of the joy of his personal triumph, let slip words that he afterward bitterly regretted, such as that he had met, in the other party, "a man sent by

Providence," a man who, like himself, did not believe "in the ugly fetishes of Liberalism."

Already, one of the predecessors of Pius XI had written in the 'eighties:

"Although in the extraordinary conditions of these times the Church usually acquiesces in certain modern liberties, not because she professes them in themselves, but because she judges it expedient to permit them, she would in happier times exercise her own liberty, and, by persuasion, exhortation and entreaty, would endeavor, as she is bound, to fulfill the duty assigned to her by God of providing for the eternal salvation of mankind."

Notwithstanding the quick disillusionment furnished to Pius XI by the "man sent by Providence" (did the latter not declare publicly not three months after the signature of the Treaties that the Christian religion would have remained one of the many Jewish sects if it had not come to Imperial Rome?), notwithstanding that, and so much else, it seems difficult to imagine that Pius XI should ever recover his freedom of action and his power. He would not believe in the freedom in which his predecessor had trusted, and he is the victim of the poor diplomatic defenses he must make for himself.

One comfort: it may be that he goes on hoping that, as long as liberty never comes back, the "happier times" may dawn when the Church—if "persuasion, exhortation and entreaty" fail—will be able to call in the secular arm to do the rest.

But meanwhile, until the "happy" times come again, the number is increasing in Italy, in France, in Germany, in Belgium, of those who used to laugh at the antiquated anticlerical slogans of Freemasonry and who have now begun to think that, after all, it is perhaps true that the secret thought of the Church is: "I ask full liberty from democ-

racies in the name of their principles; but as soon as I can, I deny to the peoples all liberty in the name of my principles."

No Freemasons, no Voltairians, ever worked as successfully for future violence in the religious field, as Pius XI has done with his treaties of 1929.

# DICTATORS

No one rises so high as he who knows not whither he is going.—CROMWELL.

## XXXIII

### Lenin

LENIN has been dead since 1924; but something much more important and complex than him, Leninism, is still living in Russia—and living as a religion. Being a religion, it burns with ecumenical proselytizing ambitions. Being a religion, Leninism pursues unto death, with neither pity nor remorse, all those who are opposed to the new truth. Being a religion, it cares not whether it destroy all the joy and beauty of life, since it fights for a future paradise; and the fact that this paradise for the first time in any religion is promised on earth adds to the violence.

Therefore, when one has proved that Leninism is the creed of a minority of fanatics, one has proved nothing. Political parties are tested by universal suffrage, but religions are not.

If it is difficult for a religion to arise, it is even more difficult for it to disappear completely; and so it will be, probably, with Leninism.

I have been in Russia twice since the Revolution of 1917; twice I have undergone the terrible feeling of suffocation one has when one is spied upon day and night, when one sees on the faces of all those one meets, the same air of terror, of reciprocal and general mistrust. The fact that this was the atmosphere of Fascist Italy as well, increased my longing for free air again. But—and this is the difference between the Russian and other terroristic régimes—a sincere Communist may reply that all that is so revolting to a Westerner is not his Leninistic religion, but only the

passing methods of a revolution to insure the New Order for the good of the human kind.

Such distinctions I heard formulated, by the way, during my last trip to Russia, not by one of the dubious politicians living at the Kremlin, but by the very nephew of a powerful ambassador of Nicholas II, with whom I had played polo years before in Constantinople and in Paris and who, having lost everything through the Revolution, was certainly a sincere, if rare, convert. Such a newly launched *distinguo* may help Leninism to go on as a religion in spite of all the many horrors and stupidities of the Revolution.

The same phenomenon is taking place—even more generally and enthusiastically—in another great country beyond Russia: in China. The cult of Sun Yat-sen, the apostle of the Chinese revolution, is beginning to crystallize into a real and proper religion—and that with the least religious people in the world.

Now, having known Dr. Sun Yat-sen well, and having had an opportunity to judge of the mediocrity of his intelligence and of the childishness of his scientific work, I was very anxious to find out whether it was not the same thing with the founder of the adjacent Russian religion, whom I never knew personally.

The books on Lenin are even more misleading than those on Sun, Lenin having been more hated and more feared. Who has not turned Lenin into a devil has made an angel of him. There are documents in support of both versions, which complicates the task of the historian. But the real difficulty lies in this: that anecdotes do not give the key to great events. And biography, after all, is only anecdote. The only safe criteria are the books and pamphlets that Vladimir Ilyich Ulianow published during his long years of exile throughout Europe, and, during the last years, in Russia, under the name of Nikolai Lenin.

But his writings thicken the mystery, for it is impossible to find one page in them, one single page, in which one feels the pulsing of a great soul, as in certain writings of Jaurès for instance, or, quite simply, any kind of originality of judgment. No, everywhere, with a persistent monotony, the copy and vulgarization of what is for him the new Gospel, Marx's work, with insults (quite his own) for the adversaries, appeals to hatred, and facile phrases that recur like the refrain of a song: "Take everything, workmen; everything you see has been stolen from you!"

At the dawn of modern life, a great Italian, Thomas Aquinas, wrote: *"Timeo homines unius libri."* He would have been right in fearing Lenin, who may have read other books, but has certainly learned by heart and revered but one: *Das Kapital.* Marx's book supplied him, not with a philosophical interpretation of the world, but with a text on which to build up a new society: it was simpler, and more to his taste.

One thing only in his books might explain the man's success: he reveals himself in them as little Slav as can be, if one accepts the current opinion that makes the Slav a dreamer, idler and metaphysician. And it is frequently an asset, for a ruler, to be different from his subjects.

Unable to find a satisfactory explanation of his success in Lenin's books, I tried to hear from the two prominent Bolsheviks, with whom I entertained fairly long official relations. I have already named one of them, Krassin; the other was Vorovski who came to Rome as soviet commercial agent when I was foreign minister, and who was murdered on May 20, 1923, at Lausanne, during the Conference for the Peace with Turkey.

I here limit myself strictly to putting down what I heard. If I tried syntheses or conclusions, I should only be repeating what has always struck me as being so weak in all the books on the Lenin phenomenon.

Krassin, honest as he was, and contemptuous of all personal vanity, seemed to me, however, in what he often told me of Lenin—he was appreciative for my curiosity—unconsciously tempted to draw a parallel between his kind of life and that of his old friend.

"He left Russia too young; he studied only in books; he had no direct personal knowledge of the world and of men; he lived in a world of abstractions; too much among exiles. . . ." By which he implied that Lenin had always chosen in life the very contrary of what he had.

Krassin loved Lenin, or at least he was grateful to him for his support. But he was too frank not to admit that his friend and chief was, intellectually, very *terre-à-terre,* and—I quote a phrase of which I took note—"childish when trying to be original." Krassin added however: "As he is, he is the backbone of the new Russia, the main support on which everything rests."

When I pointed to the intellectual misery of Lenin's writings, he simply objected: "You can not deny, at least, that he has the courage to own his mistakes whenever he has made any, as when he adopted the Nep after he had branded the economic conception the Nep stands for."

"Your praises are dangerous, Mr. Krassin. Unless you happen, even with Lenin's case, to want to convert me to the Marxian doctrine that the material forces of history make men and that it is never men who make history."

"If you like."

Vorovski was as imaginative as Krassin was, or wished to appear, matter of fact. Sprung from a noble Polish family, born a Catholic, Vorovski, however sincere a revolutionary he had become, judged, perhaps unconsciously, his Russian comrades as a stranger. Vorovski was not lacking in humor. He had come to Rome as commercial agent. I had proposed the exchange of such agents between our

two countries not only because important Italian interests were beginning to shape themselves in the basin of the Black Sea, but also because I was convinced that the resumption of some intercourse with Russia would deprive the Soviet propagandists of the forbidden fruit myth which they were trying to cultivate among certain groups of Italian workmen.

For the same reasons, I was planning to have ambassadors substituted very quickly for the commercial agents.

"A Soviet ambassador," I used to say, "received by the King with the traditional pomp of such ceremonies, making all the prescribed bows, will rapidly be a disillusion for the adoring communistic groups in Italy."

King Victor Emmanuel shared my views; and so did the Prime Minister Giolitti.

Vorovski came, therefore, to Rome, as a first step. It is worth noting, in passing, that the second step, the creation of Embassies, was taken, as soon as they came in power, by the Fascist leaders, one of whose slogans had been: "War to the knife against Soviet Russia." Such is the potency of reality in the international field.

We had in Rome thousands of Russian refugees, many of whom belonged to old families of the Moscovite aristocracy.

Some among them denounced Vorovski as bringing in his trunks historic jewels belonging to their families; strangely enough, none of the denunciators belonged to any of those families which had notoriously lost, in the recent Russian lootings, their famous and easily identifiable jewels. The denunciators added—as information received from Russia—that the jewels had been entrusted to Vorovski by the Kremlin people, as a fund for communistic propaganda in Italy. Vorovski did not enjoy diplomatic

privileges; therefore his luggage was searched, but no jewels whatever were found. He came to pay his call on me before his luggage had been returned to him, and said:

"Excuse my flannel suit, *Monsieur le Ministre,* my frock coat is at the custom house."

I laughed.

Unreliable as he was, and useless as commercial agent, I ended by rather liking the fellow, although I threatened more than once to bring our relations to an end if nothing practical came of them.

His excuse was always the same: "Lenin," he used to say, "does not understand partial advantages, gradual progress." He would add with a grin, "He goes and reads in Marx how the situations are going to develop."

He had known Lenin in Stockholm in April, 1917; and, manifestly, no sympathy had sprung up between the two men. Whenever, during our negotiations for concessions to Italy in the Black Sea Basin, Lenin's name came up, Vorovski showed the poor opinion he had of his chief's mental level. Very gifted, Vorovski was a liar such as I had not met with among the pashas of Abdul-Hamid; but, Polish-wise, he would, from time to time, fall into abysses of truthfulness. And truthful he certainly was when, risking everything, he would, in his irritation at seeing all his proposals to Moscow come to nothing, say to me: "We are led by a German schoolmaster to whom a certain disease has given some sparkles of genius."

In 1917, when Vorovski saw him, Lenin was as a person possessed by the dark foreboding of some terrible issue that would enable him to establish "the dictatorship of the proletariat." It is the only one of his prophecies that has come true.

Two years earlier, for instance, he had declared that war would end in the fraternization *(bratanie)* of the soldiers at the front,—which did not happen anywhere.

The English and Italian Socialists who spoke to me of Lenin, after meeting him at the famous gathering held at Zimmerwald to hasten the end of the war, had all received the same impression: that Lenin seemed to have two aspects, one gentle and smiling, the other hard and criminal; and that it was like two men who succeeded each other without ever meeting: Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

One of the men of Zimmerwald, who eventually became Cabinet minister of a great country, has told me that in the little village of the Bernese Oberland where they spent so many days settling the terms of a mildly democratic resolution, Lenin, pointing to Zinoviev from a distance, said to his Western comrade: "Poor Zinoviev, he is so utopian; he thinks that we can make a revolution in Russia without massacres."

Possibly Lenin's one source of strength was that he was not clever enough to doubt his own gospel. When the Caliph Omar burned the library of Alexandria, he exclaimed: "If those books contain what there is in the Koran, they are useless; if they contradict it, they are dangerous."

Lenin, more simply, has written: "The book kills the social revolution." And he acted accordingly.

## XXXIV

### Mustafa Kemal

SCHOOLBOYS in Europe and in America are at present taught in their lessons on contemporary history, that one of the victories of the Entente at the end of 1918 was the victory over Turkey. Now, the truth is, that if the victor is the country that gains everything in the treaty of peace, and the defeated are those who lose all the privileges they enjoyed in that country before the war, there is no doubt that it is Turkey which has won the war against us.

The embodiment of that Turkey is Mustafa Kemal, the Ghazi (the victorious). He was, in 1908, when I first met him, chief of the general staff of Mahmud Shevket Pasha, the Commander of the Turkish Army who, from Salonika, marched on Constantinople and forced the Sultan Abdul-Hamid to grant a constitution to his people, most of whom did not know what a constitution was. But well did the Young Turks from Salonika know, Salonika where in an ardent spirit of nationalism the *coup* had been prepared. Mustafa Kemal was only twenty-eight then; but born himself in that variegated port of the Ægean Sea where the Turks were all the more nationalistic because they were often streaked with Jewish blood, he soon became, among the young officers, one of the most active and most eloquent propagandists of the new ideas. That is why Mahmud chose him in spite of his youthfulness as chief of his general staff. Mahmud did not really belong to the kernel of the Young Turkish "lodges"; by taking Kemal he was giving them a pledge of his loyalty to the movement.

Twelve years later, at forty, 1920, Mustafa Kemal was the chief, religiously obeyed chief, of all the Turkish military forces, and in 1923 president of the Turkish Republic. A remarkable career, even in a revolutionary period.

But striking as are certain qualities of rash energy and of courageous prudence in the Turkish Dictator, one must do justice to the real authors of Kemal's fortune. Without the leaders of the British policy in Turkey after the war, Kemal and his friends would probably never have been able to make up their mind to depose and turn out the Sultan first, and then to set themselves up at Angora, there to pave the way for the destruction of the Treaty of Sèvres, that most senseless of all peace treaties. It is to Lloyd Georgian Downing Street that Mustafa Kemal ought to bow as to the Mecca of his political fortune.

Therefore, to understand clearly the origin of Kemal's power, one ought not to be misled about the responsibilities for the period that ran from 1919 to 1922. Already an official version is being launched from London through the otherwise forceful chronicles of the war that Winston Churchill is writing. As, unlike Churchill, I do not need any vindication for what I did and advocated at that time—history has already shown how right I was in my unheeded Cassandra rôle—what I am going to tell here has no merit but that of candid truth.

The armistice between the Ottoman Empire and the Allied Powers, signed near the Island of Mudros on October 30, 1918, on board the British man-of-war *Superb,* by the delegates of the Sublime Porte and Admiral Calthorpe, had imposed upon the Turks neither serious stipulations regarding disarmament and demobilization, nor penalties against the leaders, of whom some had evidently been in Austro-German pay, and who had been the strongest advocates of the alliance with the Central Powers.

A proof, this, by the way, that at that particular time, the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, which was afterward proclaimed to be an essential point of England's policy, was far from being intended. This will surprise only systematic minds of French or German formation, that is to say, reasoning and logical minds unable to understand that the rapid changes which are so often attributed to the "perfidy of Albion" are in reality due to no other cause than to the rough-and-ready empiricism and improvisation which are a part of the British political make-up.

Ten days after the Armistice, the British, French and Italian Governments decided to entrust their interests in Turkey to three High Commissioners. The British was Admiral Calthorpe, the signatory of the Armistice; the French was Admiral Amet who commanded the squadron of the Republic in the Levant; the Italian, myself. I went to Constantinople by sea, from Corfu, with an Italian squadron. All Turkish authority having melted away, our task, pending the decisions of the Big Four at the Paris Conference, was that of governors. With our squadrons in the Bosphorus and our troops in European Turkey, we had force enough to impose our rule everywhere. The three High Commissioners held their meetings once a week in their respective Embassies, by turns, each time under the presidency of the master of the house. A Grand Vizier vegetated at the Sublime Porte; the Sultan was in shameful hiding in his gorgeous palace of Dolma Bagtché. But nobody cared for them; for all sorts of claims, for demand of redress or protection, people flocked to the Allied Embassies, as to the real power. Our work was carried on without too many national rivalries. Our harmony and loyalty were constant. I had been the first to pull down my personal flag from the man-of-war that had brought me and to hoist it on the Embassy, where I went to stay. It was a poignant mo-

ment when the Italian troops, ranged in front of the Embassy, saluted the removal of the big sheet, which, with the Spanish coat-of-arms painted on it,[1] had covered the Italian marble escutcheon on the front of our house during the long years of the war. The military band played the first notes of the Italian anthem. The huge crowd which had assembled stood in deep respect: Greeks as Jews, Armenians as Turks. No hatred, no silent rancor among the Turks. They seemed to say, indeed: "Why did you not come before?"

The Dardanelles failure was probably the greatest blow of the war. When I went to Constantinople after the Armistice, I soon learned from the highest Turkish authorities that just as they had found themselves unable to resist any longer, they saw, to their great amazement, the first signs of British retreat on sea and on land. As frequently happens, they learned through the enemy that they had won; which is a further proof that military victory is, above all, a moral fact.

What struck me on my arrival in Constantinople, and on my first short trip to old Brusa, in Asia Minor, was the relative abundance of victuals I found. As we had suffered so much ourselves in Italy during the war, we had supposed that we would find starving, in a vanquished country, the thousands of Italians who had remained in Constantinople. I brought with me a great quantity of flour for them. They accepted, they politely thanked me, but went on with their Turkish flour: it was so much whiter and purer. . . . I was thus given a practical demonstration of the magnitude of the Entente's disaster when it failed to break through the Turkish ring, thus destroying the Austro-German contact with the Asiatic store-house. . . .

But the past was the past.

Now we had to look reality in the face. And the reality

[1]Spain had been in charge of Italian interests in Turkey during the war.

was that Turkey was far from dead; that the real Turkey was only temporarily down and that, if we pulled the rope too tight, she would escape our hands; that we might remain masters of Constantinople, but should be masters of a wonderfully empty house; that the active forces of Turkey would retire deeper into Asia out of our reach, and that, once there, they would turn against us.

This situation, and these anticipations, I had, from the very first, communicated to my government in Rome, and to the Peace Conference in Paris. I clearly declared that I could only serve my country by working for an early and honorable peace, giving us all sorts of advantages, but excluding any idea of Turkish partition. Knowing those projects of division of Turkey into spheres of influence, which had been entertained during the war, and were still being entertained in Paris, I did not ask for immediate approval of my conception. It was enough for me to enunciate my program and to know that it was slowly winning ground. Far from being recalled, as I had suggested might be done, my action and my policy received constant, if silent, support from Signor Orlando and from Baron Sonnino; they told me frankly that, if future facts proved I was wrong, I would be disavowed, to which I gladly assented.

The Sultan, weak and uncertain, thinking rather of his dynasty than of his country,—the worst crime in a sovereign, although not so rare,—was, even physically, the typical descendant of a family that is condemned and whose part is ended. He had chosen as Grand Vizier Damad Ferid Pasha, who, as the title *Damad* indicates, had married one of his Sovereign's sisters, Princess Alidé. Ferid had studied at Oxford, and, in our first conversation, he seemed a very successful copy of an English gentleman. In reality, nothing and no one in official Turkey showed the slightest sign

of life or strength. Those who, in London, tried to persuade Lloyd George and Lord Curzon that they could in future do anything they liked in Turkey, had every reason to believe that they were right. On the contrary, the few men who afterward made up the ruling class at Angora, and whom I frequently saw in the house of an Italian friend and even, to the great scandal of my military colleagues, at the Cercle d'Orient, impressed me as sincerely conscious of a force of their own, when they declared their ability to maintain their independence in Asia, whither they were already inclined to withdraw.

When, therefore, on May 12, 1919, Admiral Calthorpe communicated to me and to my French colleague that the Conference of Paris had decided on the occupation of Smyrna by the Greeks, I, for my part, was convinced that the affairs of the Entente would take a very bad turn. But our instructions were categorical, and nothing could be done. The landing was what it was bound to be; what, at the meeting of the high commissioners, I formally expressed the fear that it would be: an uncontested yet bloody operation, whence issued, wounded to death, the party whose violence could only seem successful to those who could not see through appearances. Greece was doomed on the very day Athens went mad with joy and patriotic pride when the news came that the white and blue flag had been planted on the Smyrna walls after—so the Greek telegrams ran—heroic fighting.

On the landing of the Greeks, the Turkish troops had at once withdrawn into their barracks. They acted thus by order of the Grand Vizier who, not from treachery but from weakness, and meaning well, had sent emissaries to Smyrna, advising resignation and giving assurance that the Greek occupation would only be temporary. Moreover, in Smyrna then, there were none of those *fedais* (the sacri-

ficed) who became, at a later date, fanatics to the death in the Turkish national cause. Who then fired from the barracks the first shot which let loose the massacre? My informers assured me at the time that it was a Greek *agent provocateur*. It certainly was not a result of political instructions from Athens, but probably owed its origin to the scheming of some Greek commander who wanted to fight an easy "battle" and win an even easier "victory." However it may be, if until then there had been hopes of finding a solution equally acceptable to every one, after the Smyrna landing it was too late. Mistakes, in politics as in moral life, beget mistakes.

The Sublime Porte had previously been guilty, from its own point of view, of the imprudence of sending Mustafa Kemal away from Constantinople by giving him a command in Asia. They were afraid, at the Imperial Palace and at the Porte, of the popularity he enjoyed among the Turks as the hero and the soul of the desperate resistance the Turkish Army had put up against the British forces at the Dardanelles. But a distant Kemal proved more dangerous than he might have been in domesticated Stamboul.

Mustafa Kemal was near Samsun when the news of the occupation of Smyrna reached him. He summoned the people together—Kemal has a real gift for eloquence—and made a speech which moved them to tears. An English officer who was in the district dispatched a telegram to Constantinople, demanding the immediate recall of the young general. The Sublime Porte was invited by us to issue an order to that effect; with the forms that it had inherited from Byzantium, Mustafa was cautiously invited to come to Stamboul only to discuss the general situation. A trait still more Byzantine, friends or prospective friends warned him urgently, from the Sublime Porte itself, that the summons was going to be dispatched; and he, who had not yet decided

*Photo from Ewing Galloway, New York*

Mustafa Kemal at the Presidential Palace in Angora

to break with the capital, set out on a tour of inspection toward Erzerum, thus avoiding the necessity of ignoring an order from the Sultan, an order that materially had not reached him.

Perhaps, with a certain amount of political resoluteness, the situation might have been saved still. But in Constantinople, only one man declared emphatically to his government in Rome, and to the Big Four in Paris, that it was necessary to accept, even more, to desire, a peace with Turkey which would be deemed satisfactory on both sides; that Turkish satisfaction would constitute the surest guarantee for all the advantages it was still possible for us to keep.

The Sublime Porte, on its side, showed itself lacking more and more in the intellectual and moral strength necessary to cope with the situation. In order to counteract the Greek occupation of Smyrna, the Grand Vizier had a stroke of genius which has never been told of before: a few days after the Hellenic landing, he asked me for a secret interview; and I received him at the summer seat of the Italian Embassy at Therapia, on the Bosphorus. After the inevitable phrases about the popularity which Italy had achieved among the Turks by her chivalrous bearing, Ferid went on complaining bitterly that the Powers had allowed a country whose citizens had all been *rayas* (Turkish subjects) three generations ago, to come and bully their old masters. "Do they not understand in Paris," he said, "that this is the very way to infuse a new life into the anti-foreign rage? When you'll be confronted some day with the fatal results of your policy, you'll accuse us; the authors of the future massacres are the Allied Powers. Ah," he went on, "things might go differently were a Great Power, liked by the Turks, entrusted with the occupation of Smyrna and of its vilayet. . . ."

As I remained silent at this hint which I had felt coming from the first ten minutes of our conversation, poor Ferid found himself obliged to state his idea clearly: that Italy ought to provoke a plebiscite in Smyrna in order to have the Greek occupation changed into an Italian one. . . .

It was the old game Abdul-Hamid had played for decades with superior skill all the time he had been in power: to create jealousies among the Powers, and thus maintain, through their jealousies, his independence. But such methods work only if preventive. Now, it was too late. Moreover, I was not so sure that the scheme, even if successful, would ultimately prove useful to Italy. Italy, to my mind, must look upon the whole of Turkey as a market for her industries; that is why she must, aside from moral considerations, oppose a general scramble; while Smyrna kept against the will of the Turks—as it would have been in the long run—would prove not only a costly and sterile operation, but also the greatest obstacle to the general peaceful penetration I was planning. But these things, which came into my mind at once, I did not say to the Grand Vizier. He would not have understood. He thought that my silence was only diplomatic prudence, and he took leave convinced that he had struck a Machiavellian blow at Inter-Allied unity.

But in the East everything gets known, whispered news circulating there more rapidly than our shouted Western informations. And Mustafa Kemal and his friends immediately heard about Ferid's idea. A few days later, one of them came to me and respectfully but plainly told me that his friends—by which he mainly meant Kemal—hoped that I would not favor the Porte's suggestion because new Turkey would consider it her duty to fight Italy in Asia just as fiercely as she was now preparing to fight the Greeks.

The loyalty of this blunt declaration impressed me most

favorably at the time. It was quite a new style in Oriental politics, as perhaps the misgivings of a diplomat at an offer of land had been.

My two colleagues in Constantinople, Admiral Calthorpe and Admiral Amet, soon realized—in spite of their only too natural military prejudices—that my views on the need for a rapid peace of compromise were not so far wrong. But to advocate that peace openly was too much for them who were hardly out of the war fever; probably, however, they envied more than once my inferior civilian complex that left me free to say to my government and to the Big Four in Paris whatever appeared to me true.

At the same time, and to counteract any timid advice of prudence from the British High Commissioner, Downing Street and the War Office received in London sanguine impressions from an Intelligence Service composed of "specialist" English officers who, little by little, were taking over all political control at the British Headquarters in Constantinople. Nothing, in their way of doing, recalled the wise, easy-going ways of the best British traditions. Enough to remember that an American diplomat in Constantinople, Philip M. Brown—only because he was not there in a quite official position—saw his cyphered telegrams to Washington returned to him. He was an old friend of mine; and they were sent by me through the Italian Foreign Office.

Unfortunately for us, the greatest field of action for the blunders of those specialists—the blunders of experts are always the grossest—was with the Turks: Western prestige went down through them in Turkey as, through the same species of specialists, it went down later on in China. It was pathetic to see how quickly they destroyed British prestige, without even putting terror in its place. "Germany without German efficiency," one day remarked my sarcastic friend Talaat Pasha.

Some of the masterpieces of what was officially called in Constantinople the Inter-Allied police, but which was simply British, are not to be forgotten.

One morning, we were told in Constantinople that we had had a narrow escape from a terrible plot against the Allies. Some among us smiled; but the British General, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces, as soon as he learned from his specialists that a vast conspiracy had been planned to start a revolution and to murder all the Roumi chiefs, acted at once with military decision. He handed to the Turkish authorities the list of the culprits, asking for their arrest within seven days; otherwise, he wrote, he would be obliged to take extreme measures. General Harington's list was composed of twenty-eight names. Eleven were politicians already at Angora and, therefore, luckily out of our reach. The other seventeen were quite unknown people, with their names insufficiently described. The arrest of the men already at Angora was out of the question; but how was one to arrest; in a great city like Constantinople, men simply indicated as Ali, or Fuad, or Ahmed?

The Turks were not troubled by small scruples. They seriously congratulated General Harington on having escaped so great a danger and promised the arrest of the men still in Constantinople. It was impossible to identify them; certainly some Alis and some Ahmeds existed in Stamboul who were not worth the ropes to hang them with. Taken they were, and hanged. General Harington was satisfied; and he withdrew his threats. I learned later on that the plot had simply served as the ends of other Turks in Constantinople, who had invented its existence for some intrigue of theirs. All this was comical, except for the hanged men. The irreparable errors, those that a government has to pay for, followed very soon. The politics of Mustafa Kemal and his friends at Angora became decisively

xenophobist, embracing in its hatred both English and French. The Italians alone were not ill-treated,—the effect of the attitude of peace that I had kept from the beginning; of which Mustafa Kemal himself had personally received, during the first weeks of my action in Turkey, a direct proof. Like the Porte, the British authorities had felt the power that Kemal's name was beginning to wield, and had thought, less considerate than the Porte had been, of apprehending him and of sending him out of Turkey. He got to know of it and, questioned as to whether he could count on my support, I answered that an apartment was at his disposal at the Italian Embassy. That also became known, and sufficed to stop the British Intelligence Service from taking steps that might have entailed diplomatic complications.

Kemal realizing—reluctantly, I believe—that there was no room left for him in Constantinople, and that the Sultan was nothing but a puppet in the hands of a foreign power, soon made up his mind. He had armed bands raised at once. Behind them he rapidly organized a serious army. The stronger he grew, the more Turks turned to him. The very officials of the Sublime Porte longed in their hearts for his triumph. To the Turks the end was henceforth plain. It was only a question of time. One point only remained uncertain: the decision of the Allies who, in April, 1920, at the Inter-Allied San Remo Conference, had finally accepted the hard terms of peace drawn up by the British Government. On the eve of San Remo, in March, Lord Curzon said: "The effective strength of Kemal has been overestimated; he is not as important a factor as some assert,"—and, by this general word "some" he referred to me who, now in Rome, continued to advocate a policy of peace with Turkey. Even more buoyantly in June, after San Remo, Lloyd George declared in a solemn speech

in London, that Greece alone was capable of "taking the place" of the Ottoman Government.

At Hythe, toward the end of June, Lloyd George had a meeting with Millerand. Venizelos offered England, whose military situation in Turkey had ended by becoming dangerous, the collaboration of all the Greek forces. His plan provided for the swift march toward the interior of Anatolia of a well-equipped army of ninety thousand Greeks, who would cut off all Kemal's lateral communications and compel him to retire into the interior where his forces would be dissolved. The French Prime Minister was resigned rather than disposed to accept the project, being pushed thereto by general diplomatic considerations and by the trouble which the Turks were causing him on the Cilician-Syrian frontier. But the consent of Italy was necessary; and for the purpose of obtaining it, a meeting of the Supreme Council was held at Boulogne immediately afterward. I was then minister for foreign affairs, and went to Boulogne to represent Italy. *À propos* of the projected Hellenic invasion of Anatolia, I formally declared that it would be a grave mistake, and that if it were desired to intensify the life and strength of Turkish militarism and nationalism, this was certainly the best way to do.

A month afterward, I spoke even more strongly at the Spa Conference. In vain. The die was cast, and the Greek Government had its way, unfortunately for the Greek nation.

The Conference which met in London in February, 1921, should have opened the eyes of the most confident. What did we see there? The delegation of Imperial Turkey, of the Sublime Porte, was headed by a venerable man respected by all, Tewfik Pasha, who had been Grand Vizier many times. The delegation from Angora was also there, headed by their minister for foreign affairs, Bekir Sami Bey.

The British Government refused to receive the latter by itself, for fear of thus granting Mustafa Kemal and his Angora Government a sort of official recognition. To the astounded eyes of the Westerners there appeared one morning, in perfect harmony, and sitting on the same bench, the two delegations that were supposed to hate each other, as those engaged in civil strife know how to hate. In our eyes, in English eyes, the venerable Tewfik Pasha had changed into the Head of all the Turks. It was not enough; he asserted his position of chief solely in order to yield the word to Bekir Sami Bey, who became the only spokesman for the Turks, of either Stamboul or Angora. At this point in the Conference, Briand and I tried to use our influence over the Turks to make them adopt a moderate attitude. Bekir was ready to understand that he had everything to gain by showing himself more willing than the Greeks to place his cause in the hands of an impartial arbitrator. The arbitration was decided upon at last. It was to take place after a careful inquiry on Anatolian territory.

When Great Britain, France and Italy proposed and accepted an inquiry, it meant, for all practical purposes, that the authors of the Treaty of Sèvres had been ill-informed, and that it was necessary to begin again from the beginning. This deprived Mustafa Kemal of all reasons for intransigeance and opened up a way for all future possibilities. So it seemed still possible soon to secure a tolerable peace. But three months later, the situation again grew worse. The Greeks had rejected the decisions of the Commission of Inquiry and decided to resort to arms. Beaten at first, they succeeded in the summer of 1921 in occupying Afium-Karahissar and Kutaya. Their front held firm for a year; or, to be more exact, Kemal had the courage to wait—a courage rarer than the courage to attack—and to compel others to wait with him. Finally, when he felt that he was

ready, he struck a decisive blow. On August 26, 1922, he attacked south of Afium-Karahissar; on the following day the Greek lines were broken. The Greek Commander-in-Chief, Tricupis, ordered a retreat that soon became a rout; on September second Tricupis himself was captured by a Turkish cavalry squadron. The Turks occupied Smyrna one week later. King Constantine lost his throne. And on October eleventh—after Great Britain, France and Italy had interposed between Turks and Greeks—we had the final result of four years of blunders, illusions and excessive pretensions—the Armistice of Mudania, by which Europe consented to the reentry into Constantinople and into eastern Thrace of the Angora Government; in short, to the triumphant return of the Turks into Europe, under the leadership of the same Mustafa Kemal whom, at the beginning of 1919, the British agents in Constantinople had planned to arrest and confine in some Malta or other.

If I have gone into all these details, it is not only because I was witness of, and actor in, this period of history, first as high commissioner to Turkey, then as foreign minister in Rome, and at the time of the Mudania Armistice, as ambassador in Paris, where I discussed the terms of the Armistice with Poincaré and Curzon; if I have told all this it is also because there lies the main explanation of Mustafa Kemal's success. As I easily prophesied at the Boulogne Conference to Lloyd George who pitied my exaggerations about a Turkish revival.

Mustafa Kemal has indeed, since his victory, ruled as a dictator a downtrodden people; he has indulged in a reforming zeal in comparison with which that of Peter the Great seems mere timidity; unhesitatingly, he has not only discarded, but ridiculed, all the Islamic traditions from which his people had for centuries drawn the best of its strength.

But who would dare to assert that these accomplishments definitely belong to history—and that it has really been a token of greatness to Westernize the Turks in a trice, obliging a dutiful people to give up the fez and the baggy cassocks of old for our ugly dress? The reforming and dictatorial fancies of Kemal will one day be remembered—granted they do not fall into nothingness—as the fits of one more among the long line of "benevolent despots" who have throughout the ages succeeded one another in the East. Dwarfed by distance, it will merely seem that Kemal added a touch of ridicule to his reforms by having made them too precisely and too quickly on patterns which railways and steamers had, to all appearances, brought closer to a people who morally, however, was as distant from them as ever.

Where Kemal has been an active force of a new era is as war lord and as organizer of the struggle against foreign invasion; and there, contrary to what he did in peace time, his greatness lies essentially in his Fabian prudence. Urged by his friends and, at that time, would-be rivals from Angora, to strike his blows quickly, he waited patiently for months and months; he slowly increased his war material. It is only when he knows that the greatest chances are on his side that he strikes; but then, once he has struck, the inactivity his "friends" reproached him with gives way to a frenzy of movement and of attack that stops only when all the Greeks are thrown into the sea.

Again, the marvelous native gifts of Kemal as military leader revealed themselves on the morrow of that unparalleled triumph, when he found himself confronted at Chanak—facing the deadly Gallipoli Peninsula—by a dangerous show of resistance by the British. It was the time when Lloyd George had decided that the triumphal march of the Turks toward Constantinople must be stopped at the neutral zone

of the Straits. Lloyd George had decided thus against the advice of Italy and of France—and, what is worse from the point of view of the British commonwealth—without consulting the Dominions. Lord of an army that would have obeyed without a word, this was how Kemal avoided the terrible risk. I quote Churchill who was, with Lloyd George, the artizan of the British policy of war and who does not seem to realize, judging by his description, that credit must be given to Kemal alone for having avoided new bloodshed between Turks and Western Powers four years after the war:[1]

". . . He hurried on as fast as he could toward the main and easy goal, and used his flank guard of cavalry to give an appearance of strength and aggressiveness toward the British at Chanak. His cavalry officers had the strictest orders to avoid the conflict, and above all to get into friendly parley. Their unabashed good-humour was proof against the severest and most formal frowns. They made every effort to fraternise, and even ventured requests for camp equipment and the minor conveniences of campaigning. There never was any danger to British forces at Chanak. The menace was to Constantinople; but the defence of Constantinople in the absence of the other two Great Powers was not primarily a British responsibility."

I have known well another Turkish military leader of the revolution, Enver Pasha. He was, during a few momentary years, the soul and the force of a Turkish action, in the first period of the Union and Progress Committee, in the war against Italy, in the Balkan wars; he never despaired, not even when the Balkan Allies were at Chatalja. But his intelligence and his will were fraught with fraud and vanity, and I strongly doubt whether he would have proved as much of a blend of audacity and patience as Kemal,—Kemal in the field.

[1]Churchill, *The Aftermath.* Ch. XIX.

In Kemal the old warrior spirit of the Turks has reincarnated itself in a manner worthy of the Osmanli who threatened Europe under the walls of Vienna. All the rubbish of most of his reforms is but stuff for the newspapers; they are certainly not to the credit of his sense of history. At best can one say that he knows even better than we Westerners do that he may take these liberties and more with a people who has in its blood to obey the Chief, whatsoever he may say or do.

In any case, if his dictatorship still is, or still seems to be, a success, we ought not to forget that all his policy was marked at the start by two rare decisions which are the very opposite of what all dictators have always done and still do. Dictators always end in disaster, because they are obliged to seek for a policy of show and of vain prestige; they have to supply glory to compensate for liberty. Kemal had the pluck and the originality to adopt a courageous line of renunciation at the beginning of his domination and—what is still more original—to stick to it even amid the intoxication of military success.

The Turkish Empire with its caliphate, with its threats of Jihad (holy war), pretended to a world policy that had long been anachronistic. Mustafa Kemal was the first to insist, at Angora, that New Turkey must renounce all claims to influence outside her racial frontiers. Determined to remain the master in Turkey, he boldly abdicated all claims outside it. From the very first months of 1919 when I was in Constantinople as high commissioner I had the proof that he felt from the beginning that there lay the only way to salvation for a really independent Turkey.

The head of the powerful Moslem sect of the Senussis, whose central basis lay in the southern part of the Italian colony of Cyrenaica, had escaped to Brusa, in Asia Minor. Convinced as I was, and am, that only a policy of local

autonomy and peace may give prosperity to our African colonies, I entered upon patient and lengthy parleys with the Senussi Chief, offering to reinstate him in his possessions and to grant him a large share of autonomy on condition that he would loyally and formally acknowledge the suzerainty of Italy and would bind himself to favor our political and economic interests in Bengazi and in Tripoli. The conversations were successful and led to settlement which worked out to our satisfaction, till it was destroyed by the Fascist Government when they discovered in Cyrenaica a field for cheap and deceptive military success. Anxious as I was to secure for Italy the allegiance of the Senussis, and fearing lest the Turks, whose defeat I knew to be apparent only, should influence them in the opposite sense, I gave some hint of my negotiations to Mustafa Kemal, and his friends. They sent me the following answer: "The maintenance of Turkish domination over the Arabs has been one of the causes of our decline. We do not want to hear any more about them. Let them settle matters with you as they please, and as you please."

The courage of this answer confirmed me in my belief in Turkish awakening. And it goes to the credit of Kemal's statemanship that he never changed his mind on this question.

He had grasped that Imperial Turkey was a backward country between Europe and Asia; and that, by becoming a purely Anatolian power, Republican Turkey might in her turn become a factor for progress if she only looked toward Central Asia, as she does now. These are the real political innovations that Kemal has had the courage to devise and to carry out. That is why they are so little spoken of, and the whole world has eyes only for his childish games of alphabetic and sartorial reforms.

It was worth while bringing out the fact that if this

dictator seems, alone of his kind, to attain success, it is because he has dared to do what no dictatorship has ever done: to cut down, or renounce, the noisy and rhetorical legacies which the empty prestige policy of the previous régime had bequeathed to him.

## XXXV

### Pilsudski

ONE may study Cromwell or Bonaparte without thinking all the time of the origins of England or of the passions of France.

But to understand what Pilsudski is and means, nothing is more necessary than an understanding of old Poland—of that turbulent Poland where the nobles chose the Polish representatives for the Diet, only to render the Diet's work impossible by the exercise of the *Liberum Veto,—i. e.,* the right of each member to prevent by his *no* the passing of any law, even if voted for by all his colleagues. The nobility, whence came the Diet, was numerous, poor, proud; numerous—once, a whole army that had just beaten the Turks, was ennobled; poor, for the administration of estates was too mean a concern for it; proud, for the shabbiest and most déclassé among the noblemen knew that, legally, he had the right to be elected king.

The *Liberum Veto* naturally led to anarchy, to governmental impotency; nineteenth-century western Europe was to discover the theory of the omnipotence of parliamentary majorities, whereas eighteenth-century Poland, more individualistic, had discovered the omnipotence of opposition, be it of one man only.

But, since a State must live, the Poles made an even more surprising discovery. It was unworthy of a Polish nobleman to give way to a parliamentary majority; but if that majority took the shape of armed action, the same nobleman who could not, without disgracing himself, give

in to votes, could give in to swords drawn against him and his own. Two parties that appealed to arms called themselves respectively "the armed Federation"; the lucky one which succeeded in capturing the King's person became the "Great Federation" and gave the law as long as it remained the strongest.

Such was the political life of independent Poland. Then came, after the great organized plunder of Prussia, Austria and Russia, the partition, the disappearance, a century of exiles, rebellions and dreams.

One might have thought that a century of suffering would have changed many things. When, after the war, we saw the Poles reappear at Versailles and in all our capitals, we found that they were still the delightful and unpractical Poles of old. Their public men flooded the Cabinets of the Entente with memorials, reports, plans, historical reconstructions, juridical theses without end. According to them, half of Europe had been Polish and might have become Polish again. Poles are sometimes accused of a somewhat feminine want of logic. These Poles were terribly logical and persistent, with the result that everybody got sick of their claims.

So it happened, for instance, that when Dmowski asked for the annexation of East Prussia to Poland, to avoid, as he very logically said, the paradox of the Dantzig Corridor, diplomatic Europe became so irritated with these eternally increasing demands that, had matters depended on Lloyd George alone, we might have seen in the end a Fourth Partition.

In a second period concerning their home policy, the Poles assured us they were framing a Constitution, than which none would have been safer for Democracy. Did not one of its Articles explicitly "forbid the use of armed forces except under request of the Authorities and in the cases established by the law"?

And suddenly, in came Pilsudski and swept all that away like cobwebs. . . . The regiments who swore allegiance to him were following the man who had, his whole life long, passionately defended the cause of Polish resurrection, the man who, during the war, had created the Polish legions out of nothing. But his partizans, even as he, obeyed—perhaps unconsciously—the ancient hereditary laws of Polish history.

Much argument has been spent as to whether or not Pilsudski was a Socialist, a man of democracy or not, a Fascist or not. This last word he has always rejected as an insult. In reality, he is only this, or at least, especially this: the Polish nobleman from the old small nobility, come to fame through his fortune in war, such as the history of Poland shows us by the dozen. Pilsudski, in addition, has this: that Poland now lives in a more or less Liberal Europe, and that he may claim that he and his followers can serve a democratic Poland better than the narrow-minded members of the small bourgeoisie; or than the Labor Party, useful in opposition but unfit to rule; or than the ultra-nationalistic middle classes intent only on keeping down the eleven million non-Poles included in Poland.

Pilsudski started as a revolutionary Socialist, a conspirator against Russia and leader of terrorist organizations. One of his most intimate friends of those romantic days, a petty nobleman like himself, penniless like himself, but unlike him still sentimentally faithful to all his old Socialist ideas, who is now no more than a mild old philosopher, was showing me two years ago, in his dilapidated house on the shores of the Bug, a bundle of letters, yellowed by time, exchanged between Pilsudski and himself. The dreamer was writing to the hero: "I am afraid that you believe too much in soldiers and too little in ideas." And Pilsudski: "Yes, my dear, for Poland I prefer a few

Pilsudski with his family in the parlor of his little country house, the "White House"

The "White House"

machine-guns to a mountain of copies of your Marx's *Capital.*"

If one may, from this correspondence, deduce rare gifts of energy and will-power in Pilsudski, one can not say as much for his prophetic spirit; in 1904, he confides to his friend that he hopes for an early revolution in Austria and Germany, but that there will never be one in Russia.

In reality, Pilsudski has never been a revolutionary, in the modern, "scientific" way, as he is not now a "dictator" in the neuropathic post-war sense of the word. He is simply the tradition-made man of the Polish gentry, a turbulent class of belted warriors, sometimes self-sacrificing and active, more often lazy and parasitic, always unpractical because their dreams are too lofty and too distant, with no understanding of foreign mentalities, and no regard for classes not born to the sword.

As Pilsudski is now, so he was when a leader of the Polish Socialist Party, before the war. Now, strong and even great, but whimsical and incalculable, he goes in and out of power, according to his fits,—of one thing only always careful: to see to the stage effect of his entrances and exits; not out of vanity, but to keep Polish impressionability under his spell.

When a Socialist, in the Russian days, he was not different. For instance, during the 1905 revolutionary movements, he led the terroristic forces of the party in a way so opposed to any possible aim of a Labor organization that the Central Committee felt obliged to call him up to explain his activity; he simply replied by asking for the terroristic groups—*i. e.,* for himself—absolute command of the whole organization.

Difficult, then, to charge Pilsudski with the turncoat operations of almost all dictators; he was never a democrat, if we take democracy as respect for one's fellow men;

through him, old Polish Socialism received a nationalistic, romantic, military coloring, with as much connection with democratic ideas as Napoleon's *grognards* had with the ideas predominating in the armies of Hoche. With the Polish State reestablished, Pilsudski in power may have thought sincerely that he kept loyal to all his ideas of the past because—as he boasts among his intimate friends—he has never signed a death sentence, he has never ordered anybody arrested for political motives, he has never sent any one into exile.

And after all, the Pilsudski adventures and decisions may not fit into the frame of an artificial Constitution written by a Committee of learned professors, but they fit into the whole tradition of Polish history. Poland—and Pilsudski—have plenty of excuses for their retarded political growth, for their carrying the ideology of a past age into our present Europo-American atmosphere. All this is simply the consequence of the fact that Poland regained her independence and unity generations after Italy and Germany; and that Poles got accustomed, during centuries of slavery, to speak of government as "they," and to hating *them*. Now they speak of Pilsudski as "he"—with this difference, however, that even his enemies do not hate *him* at the bottom of their hearts.

No use, then, imputing to Pilsudski facts that were probably fatal. What, in my opinion, will remain Pilsudski's greatest error—and his historical responsibility—is the part he played in shaping the rash new eastern frontiers of Poland. A partial application of his old romantic ideas about White and Little Russians and about a Ukrainian buffer state, these boundaries enter so deeply into the very flesh of Russia that it might be difficult for them ever to become the sacred thing that the frontiers of a country ought to be. When one comes by rail from Russia into present-day Poland, one can not but be struck by the symbolical dif-

ference between the two frontier stations: the Polish station is a charming stone building covered with artistic tiles; the Soviet station is simply a series of old cars with a pair of bare wooden rooms that might be taken down in six hours. Pride and a sort of gloomy certainty show more on the Soviet side.

But, again, if Pilsudski is a militarist and a nationalist—and being the incarnation of Poland of the past, he can not be anything else—he is not a militarist or a nationalist in the conventional German, French, Fascist way. Behind the latter sort of nationalisms, interests are hidden; behind him, only sentiments. The most vulgar Polish jingoes were not with him when he risked his life in plotting against Russia; they contented themselves, more prudently, with attacking and persecuting Jews and Little Russians, both despised in St. Petersburg. These are the new bourgeois, who have gained none of the qualities of modern democracy, who have lost all the qualities of the old Polish nobility.

He, Pilsudski, despises them, having remained, every inch of him, a Polish gentleman of the smaller nobility. His officers, around him, never call him the Marshal; he is for them the *starszy pan,* the "elder gentleman," as the head of a family living on his estates is still called. And the tempers, the jests, the *laisser-aller,* the bad language of Pilsudski, can only be understood by those who have seen the fits of anger of a *starszy pan* venting his temper on the administrator of his estate in the country when the latter is unable to raise a new loan on the mortgaged land.

Pilsudski's is the queerest dictatorship to be found in Europe. All dictatorships have been based, and are based, on the interest of a class or cast, or, as was the case with Bonaparte, on the mad ambition of a man. Pilsudski's is a case of the sentimental spell of hero worship; and there is nothing he hates more than being compared to other dictators in fashion.

The Poles of the old Republic had coined this unique and ultra-Polish maxim: "The non-existence of government is the foundation of Poland."

Strong-willed as he is, Pilsudski is, even in his strength of will, the reincarnation of old, romantic, quixotic, anti-materialistic Poland.

## XXXVI

### Trotzky and Stalin

LENIN, when he lay dying, left to his party a "testament" in which he referred to the hatred that divided Trotzky and Stalin, expressed the opinion that the conflict might be very harmful to the party and, defining Stalin as "too rough," recommended that he be dismissed from his post as General Secretary of the Communist Party in order to avoid a schism.

On Lenin's death the testament was read in the Politbureau. It was read by Stalin. That alone should have given Trotzky food for thought; that Stalin should want the reading, and that he tendered his resignation. Trotzky, then all-powerful, admired for his eloquence, praised as the Napoleon of the Red Army, made the mistake of despising Stalin, the ignorant and silent Asiatic from Tiflis; he allowed him to keep his place.

Even now when it is Stalin who is all-powerful and Trotzky who is in exile, no one attributes to the former the sort of genius generally ascribed to the latter. And yet, the manner in which Stalin forged the weapon with which he succeeded in striking Trotzky is enough to indicate a maneuvering skill to which the proud Trotzky would have been wise to show a little more attention. Stalin was General Secretary of the Russian Communist Party, whose committee was composed of nineteen members. He managed under varied pretexts to have this number carried to forty-six, and afterward to seventy-one. With less than twenty members, the post of General Secretary was not a

very important one. With more than seventy, it became all-important.

Trotzky's gifts were especially literary and oratorical; Stalin's strength lay in silent Oriental intrigue.

In one of his speeches in his days of power Trotzky made the inevitable comparison between Lenin and Marx. "The style of Marx," he said, "is rich and magnificent, forceful and supple, a constant, admirable blend of irony and elegance. Lenin's style is naked and simple, utilitarian and ascetic." One feels certain that the word "ascetic" is there as an operatic bow to Lenin, but that the flowery attributes to Marx's style reveal what Trotzky is thinking of his own literary and intellectual temperament. Through his co-religionist, Marx, he was thinking of himself.

In this excessive appreciation of his own intellectual force lies what has been probably Trotzky's heaviest mistake. He forgot that in the new Russia in which he had helped to shape things, the official spheres belonged to mechanized influences and that intelligence was considered one of the suspicious remnants of the old individualistic world. That is why he was wrong in despising Stalin and his coarse, Oriental knavery; he did not realize that the suppression of freedom had destroyed the immediate force of intelligence.

The first struggles between Trotzky and Stalin began immediately after Lenin's death and went on without interruption until the expulsion of Trotzky from Russia in 1929.

In their oratorical duels Trotzky was constantly the victor; in a free country like England or France he probably would have been able to recapture power. But the beaten Stalin each time went back to his Kremlin room, and, without thinking of oratorical revenge, in his quiet Asiatic way he knew how to offer or "impose" lucrative appointments

on Trotzky's friends, scattering them in the most distant parts of the country.

Trotzky, proud (or vain) in the same way that another gifted Socialist, Lassalle, had been proud (or vain), refused to attach any importance to Stalin's tactics. He had not realized—he, the enemy of liberty—that a few years without any freedom of speech or of press may rapidly reduce a people to appalling losses of moral character. Human dignity wants freedom to live and assert itself.

Another error did Trotzky commit, even with regard to the few Communistic comrades who really cared for pure Bolshevism and who had maintained some individual critical power: to wage war upon the hated secretary of the Communist Party, he chose as war-cry the return to "pure" Leninism. He violently denounced Stalin and his followers as neglectful of the interests of the only reliable element of the Russian Communistic masses—the workmen—and as coming to unworthy compromises with the rich peasants, the *Kulaki*. But the rare, sincere, thoughtful revolutionaries instinctively felt that if Stalin was compromising with the "sacred principles" it was only because it was a question of life and death, and that Trotsky would have done the same thing. Some added: "Was not Trotzky a Menshevik in the first days of the revolution?"

The group in power in Russia, be it Stalinian or Trotzkian, is inspired only by a supreme necessity—to remain at the Kremlin. They know that among the many impossible things for them to do, the most impossible is to resign, or to allow themselves to be dismissed. Too many hatreds, too much spirit of revenge, are in the air; they feel them—and that is why they are not really in power; they are entrenched in power with boastful words, but with trembling hearts. An analogous phenomenon is taking place in Fascist Italy.

This—to remain in power at all costs—is the task of Stalin; a task for which he is probably more the right man in the right place than his defeated rival would have been. The Messianic imagination which gives such brilliant glamour to some Jewish brains might have tempted Trotzky to experiments, to novelties. The cold vulgar Georgian, now supreme at the Kremlin, reminds me of the Turkish viziers who were driving European diplomacy to despair on the shores of pre-war Bosphorus. Shrewd Armenian, or Jewish, or Greek advisers dictated beautiful speeches or learned notes for them. They used these speechs; they went on speaking of the historical rights of the Ottoman Empire; but at the bottom of their hearts, they knew and felt only this: "Let us gain six months; after that, we'll see."

Possibly this, and only this, is the hidden thought of politicians whom the hazards of a troubled period have turned into dictators. Pitiful expressions of the post-war neurasthenia, what really matters for the world is not what they say or do in their kinematic, artificial life—but what their nations think.

Difficult as it is to find it out in an atmosphere of silence and terror, one may at least safely admit that the potential discontent in Russia, visible until a few months ago only among the peasants, is now growing also among the workmen. Trotzky was right in feeling this, but was wrong in thinking that the cure might be pure Leninism.

Indeed, the Russian workmen, who have asked only since the Revolution for higher wages, have begun in 1929 and 1930 to ask two highly important moral things: the right to strike, and secret votes in the elections.

After torrents of blood, after mountains of propaganda—books pretending to prove that a new era, with new ideas, had come—the Russian nation rediscovers at last

that the only safe basis for any progress is simply—liberty.

If they are coming so slowly and hesitatingly to feel again that freedom, after all, is the supreme necessity, it is because they had been dazzled by the idealistic hope that, through their sufferings, they were laying the foundations of a new world—and this appealed to the very nature of the Russian soul with its longing for suffering.

Violent theoretical discussions about Communistic doctrines, enthusiasm for Trotzky, the orator, or trust in the silent Stalin—all this would simply have meant the eternal going on of the old Russian mania for dogmatic, unreal fighting. Not from that could the régime be endangered.

But the awakening of the idea of liberty—this, and only this—has such power that no mercenary armies, no nets of spies, no Siberias, have the force to overcome it.

Czarism was doomed when it identified itself with the *Katorga,* the tragic Russian word in which all the horrors of Siberian deportation are synthetized. Lenin and Trotzky yesterday, Stalin to-day, remain in power through the terror of their new *Katorga.* But if the Czar's secret police did not save the lords of the old Russia, the Soviet's terroristic methods will not save the comrades of the Kremlin, no matter who they are.

It is probable that the Bolshevik leaders sometimes wonder how it happens that they still provoke so much terror—feigned or real—in certain European quarters. They think, I presume, that foreigners would be much nearer reality in—pitying them.

The Chinese have a wonderful phrase to describe the weakness of certain types of so-called strong dictatorial governments: they are—so the picturesque idiom runs—riding a tiger.

## XXXVII

### Yuan Shi-kai and Sun Yat-sen

THE anarchical disorders that tear China, and will tear her for a long time still, find their immediate origin in the Revolution of 1911-12 which led to the suppression of the Empire. I witnessed it. I was the last representative of a Great Power to present my credentials to the Imperial Court. A piece of good fortune it was for any one with any sense of history, to watch the last years of the Ching Empire. It was a plastic vision of what the decadence of the Roman Empire must have been; the pages of Gibbon I had read as a youth were coming back to my mind as a living thing. All the rites observed through sheer force of habit, but no faith left in the hearts; a splendor of ceremonial and pageantry round the Emperor, but—if only one looked below the surface—mere theatrical scenery, disorder, weariness; imperial decrees couched in majestic and imperative formulæ, humble lip service from the subjects; and thereupon, each one immediately doing as he pleased.

Beyond the Empire, beyond the laws, what remnant of strength was left lay in the Confucian construction of the family and—through the Five Relations—of the whole of social life.

Three factors led to the disruption of the imperial framework—this first blow at the Confucian Five Relations. One was a periodical phenomenon: the traditional antithesis between North and South which, in the millenary history of China, brought, every two or three centuries, into the annals of the Empire an interregnum of anarchy closed

each time by the brigand or the general strong enough to found a new dynasty. The second factor of disruption was new: the discontent of the thousands of returned students, back from Europe or the United States, convinced they knew better than all the old mandarins, but left by the latter to mark time in the antechambers of their *yamens*.

The third factor was—Yuan Shi-kai.

Now that everything has crumbled to pieces which he tried to do, it is the fashion to treat Yuan Shi-kai as a vulgar fraud. By criticizing him, historians believe they are giving a proof of their fairness toward Young China and that they shall not risk being marked out as biased in favor of the past when they criticize Yuan's adversary, Sun Yat-sen, and his devotees.

As for me, who saw Yuan at work, and who can not bring myself to rate a man on success, Yuan remains one of the toughest personalities I have ever met with,—in the East of course.

Yuan Shi-kai was born in the old central province of Honan, in 1859, of a family that had long distinguished itself in the service of the State. Early in life, after qualifying for a Bachelor degree, Yuan scandalized the family friends by adopting the then despised military profession. After some unlucky soldiering in Korea, where he had become imperial resident, he went back to China, and the famous Chihli Viceroy, Li Hung-chang, entrusted him with the command of a new force of five thousand men, to be trained, as an experiment, on Western methods, at a camp near Tientsin, old Li's residence. This was the beginning of China's modern armies, which have proved such a scourge to the life of the country.

The fame of Yuan's military forces became an all-important factor in the *coup d'état* of 1898, when the unfortunate Emperor Kuang Hsu planned to Westernize China.

Yuan was in the reformers' plot, but at the last moment, afraid of the Empress Dowager, he failed the Emperor. The old Buddha, as all China used to call the famous Empress, resumed power and made Kuang Hsu practically a prisoner in the Imperial Palace. One of the reformers, whom I have known well as an exile, Kang Yu-wei, has always maintained to me that Yuan not only failed to assist the Emperor but betrayed him. Certainly the Emperor's brothers and family held that opinion and acted upon it, when, after the death of Tzu Hsi, the terrible old Buddha, the first opportunity was seized by the newly appointed Regent, Kuang Hsu's brother, to strip Yuan of all his offices and to drive him ignominiously into retirement.

But no one reproached him with this episode of his life in practical and skeptical China (the reformers had all fled from the country for their lives), and when, on her return to Peking after the Boxers troubles, Tzu Hsi appointed him viceroy of Chihli, the appointment was welcomed by Chinese and foreigners alike as the best guarantee for the restoration of stability and progress. In this office he succeeded in setting an example to the whole Empire in the matter of progressive administration. In September, 1907, he went to Peking as the head of the Wai-wu-pu (Foreign Office). His independence, fair dealing and willingness to accept responsibilities, were new features in Chinese public life. If, at the death of the old Buddha, he was dismissed by the Regent, it was only because the latter felt that his duty was to avenge his unhappy imperial brother who had died in the gilded prison of the Forbidden City.

Supreme reasons of State, however, decided the Regent to invite Yuan to resume office again; it was when the revolution broke out at Wuchang in October, 1911.

In Yuan Shi-kai's mind the idea that the days of the Manchu dynasty were henceforth numbered was probably as-

sociated with the feeling that he would never be safe with the brother of the man he had betrayed. At bottom, what he never forgave the Regent was his own treason of 1908; it is frequently like that, with men.

Being in Peking at the time as Italian minister, I soon found out the secret thoughts of Yuan. One evening he sent word that he wished to see me as soon as possible. I went to him on the following day. He spoke of matters for which he needed the approval of the Diplomatic Corps and asked for my support of his views at our next meeting; then, the conversation seemed to wander off into generalities, and, after a few other questions of things Italian, he asked: "But what was [and I soon felt that the essential part of the conversation was coming] that famous Italian law which I have heard spoken of as a masterpiece of wisdom, by which Italy had made a sovereign of the Pope at the very moment she was dispossessing him, and through which it had been possible for two sovereigns to live together in the same capital? And how had the world taken this compromise?"

I explained at length to him, as far as was possible with a Chinese, the subtleties of the Law of Guarantees, and never had I seen him so intent. On February 12, 1912, Yuan had the young Empress Dowager, Lung Yu, sign, on behalf of the Child Emperor, the following decree:

". . . Now the inhabitants of the whole Empire are in favor of the Republic. The Southern provinces were the first to plead for its establishment, and the generals of the North followed suit.

"How could we be so hardened as to keep our rank, the rank of a single family, in the face of the wishes of four hundred million inhabitants?

"In agreement with the Emperor, we entrust the people with sovereign power and proclaim the Republic to satisfy the people.

"We grant Yuan Shi-kai full power to form a republican government in conjunction with the revolutionary army.

"Respect to this."

It was the first time in history that a Republic was founded by imperial decree.

Other decrees followed maintaining to the Emperor and his family their titles, but as heraldic titles, allowing them the use of the Imperial Palace, et cetera.

A few months later Yuan was officially elected president of the Chinese Republic.

If his betrayal of Emperor Kuang Hsu in 1898 was worse than a crime,—a blunder (because reform coming from a legitimate sovereign might have been a success in China as it had been in Japan),—Yuan's attempts in 1915 and '16 to have himself proclaimed emperor can hardly be censured, except for the fact that they did not succeed.

True that the foreign ministers to China at the time, and especially Sir John Jordan and myself, tried, within their respective limits of influence, to help Yuan—Yuan, the opportunist—against the "idealists" of Canton and Nanking. All the miseries that befell China after the death of Yuan—and the long tale of miseries still to come—explain why men yet convinced that everything in the old China was rotten were satisfied to see a prosaic reality come to pass; a reality which, after all, contained, as well we knew, the seeds of so marked a progress over the Ching Empire.

It would be unfair, and too easy, summarily to condemn Yuan because he failed.

We must judge him as an Oriental. And in purely Oriental statecraft, in the art of diplomacy, Yuan proved to be self-reliant and silent, leaving little to chance, knowing how to weaken the hands of almost every man in whom he saw a rising danger. But, beyond this, gifts which are rare, even in our West: a marvelous flair for merit and tal-

ent in his subordinates, the art to inspire them with feelings of respect and loyalty uncommon in Chinese *yamens;* above all, an intuitive appreciation of the soul of his countrymen, but only within the limits of the moral philosophy upon which his China was founded.

He did not believe in the fitness of his country for self-government; hence his futile attempt to restore the Empire in his person. The Monarchy was to him the only possible bond to maintain the integrity of the country. When he professed his belief in the Republic and accepted the presidency he was simply adhering to the orthodox traditions of the Mandarinate and practising the supple statecraft which he had learned in the service of Li Hung-chang. To condemn him for that would be like blaming him for being a Chinese of his time.

There remains the question of his failure. But the forces that have been liberated are as incalculable as the inertia of the mass on which they act. Probably no personality would have been strong enough to master the storm. Since Yuan's death other men have tried. Here and there in the flood of anarchy which has swept over China, one imagined to have found rocks round which the waters would break; but one soon perceived that they were mere sand-castles such as our children build in summer on the beach, destined soon to crumble away one after the other.

Only one man seems to have proved an exception: Sun Yat-sen. But Sun became powerful only in death. He is no phenomenon of individual power; it is new China that has created Sun—and that now reveres him according to the formulæ perpetuated by the rites. When my thoughts go to the misty shadow of Doctor Sun as I used to know him in China in 1912 and in 1913, the fate of the man, his enigma, remain unexplained to me, just as they were then. Living, he appeared a sort of melancholy Kerenski—at least,

so one might have said after the Russian Revolution. Dead, he is a Lenin, an all-powerful Lenin for his countrymen.

When he was struggling against Yuan Shi-kai in the first years of the Revolution, Doctor Sun wrote a mountain of nebulous books, which were an undigested amalgam of miscellaneous Western ideas with Chinese preconceptions. The memory of those years should carry a great lesson of modesty for all of us Westerners who were living in China at the beginning of the Revolution. None of us thought for a moment that a constitution for China might come out of Sun's books.

And now we have the biggest nation in the world united, in appearance at least, in considering as dogma all the phrases that Sun Yat-sen fancied to write down during his wandering years as conspirator and party man. When his three *Minn* (principles) are referred to, everybody bows in China, silently and respectfully.

Were all of us so very wrong? Or how is it that Sun has become a symbol?

The problem is worth studying. And to begin with, we might perhaps read, in their official text, the famous three *Minn,* which everybody refers to, but which so few really know.

*The Three Principles of the People* is the title of one of Sun's books, a book of five hundred pages, so diffuse that, in spite of the fame of the author, no Sinologue has dared to attempt a translation.

The following is a resumé written by Sun himself in English (he was practically bilingual, like Ghandi), at the request of a foreign friend who gave it to me in 1924. Here it is:

"The first principle is the People's livelihood, which means to have regard to the people's four main needs: food, clothing, housing and communication. The govern-

ment must make every effort to develop agriculture, that the people may have sufficient food; to develop the weaving industry for the people's clothing, to lay plans for the building of every type of house for the people's dwellings and to construct roads and utilize the rivers for the people's communications.

"The second principle is Democracy (People's Power): having regard to the education of the people for understanding and ability in government; the government must lead them to the practice of all the popular powers of 'election,' 'recall,' 'initiative,' 'referendum.'

"The third principle is the Principle of Nationality (the People's Nation); with regard to all small weak peoples within the country, the government must assist them to ability for self-government; with regard to external aggression, the government must resist it; moreover, at the same time the government must revise all treaties for the reversion of the country to an equal independent status among nations."

It is only in the light of subsequent fame and pontifical importance assumed by the three *Minn,* that it seems natural now to discover that the third one of them has its basis in the present nationalistic European doctrines; that the second descends from the tenets of the American and French Revolutions; and that the first constitutes the link which, in a second period of his political activity, united Sun and the Chinese Communists.

In reality the development of his Three Principles, as given in numerous works by Sun himself, can not but strike a Western mind as the work of a sort of naïve visionary spirit living outside realities.

For instance, explaining the *Minn* on the necessity of racial unity, Sun Yat-sen wrote in another of his ponderous books:

"The unity of all the Chinese is an absolute necessity, because the white race is multiplying at a much faster rate than we are. The Americans will soon be confronted by

a crisis of over-population: on that day, if China is not strong and united, how will our sons prevent the Americans from swallowing them?"

But the crux of Sun's disquisitions—and the field where he shows his mental and cultural immaturity—is his long teaching and explaining of the *Minn-Sen,* or people's material life.

To put it in a nutshell, he says:

"The Chinese citizens have full right to all the national resources in land and capital; the Chinese Republic must undertake all banking, all road building, all enterprises in railways and harbors, all navigation and steamship commerce, thus putting a limitation on capitalism and on the creation of too large private fortunes. When capitalism will be governed by the new limitations schemed by the Quo-Min-Tang, then the people, all the people, will happily enjoy their national wealth."

One might remark that, after all, the program of the British Labor Party—as it was elaborated and proclaimed for the 1929 elections—is not so different from Sun Yat-sen's ideas. And how is it that, while one could like or dislike Ramsay Macdonald's old program, nobody laughed at it, while it is so difficult to refrain from smiling at Sun's formulæ?

There is no injustice in this. Because in the British case, it is a question of principles—collectivistic against individualistic. In the Chinese case, it is a question of mixing epochs; Sun traces for a China which is like the Europe of the eleventh century, a program which is hardly to be accepted by a Europe of the twentieth century.

A few practical examples will suffice:

The public officials in China are the most corrupt in the world. How would it be possible to give them such a large control over public utilities?

I understand that government-owned shipping is far from profitable, even in America. Transplanted to China, it would create an unparalleled field of graft and disorganization.

Sun Yat-sen took it for granted that the necessary capital would easily be found in America and Europe. The contrary is true. With life and property so insecure in China, American and European capital will probably become more and more adverse to moving to that country.

To do full justice to Sun, there is one document—and only one—among the thousands of pages written by him, which gives the impression of a prophetical look into the future. It is when I read this document after having left China that I doubted the fairness of the rather poor recollections I had kept of my personal intercourse with Sun.

The document I allude to is the telegram Sun sent Lloyd George to dissuade him from insisting upon having China as an ally in the World War. It has remained practically unknown, except among a close circle of specialists. Old texts, especially diplomatic texts, usually lack any permanent life. Sun's telegram to which Lloyd George made no answer—can not be read, even to-day, without emotion.

"I owe my life to England"—so, in an abrupt manner contrary to all Chinese literary tradition, Sun began his appeal—"I am grateful to her for it. It is both as friend of England and as Chinese patriot that I have come to point out to you the momentous consequences that the campaign undertaken by agents of yours, urging China to go to war, may have for China and for England.

"Searching discussions with eminent Englishmen have convinced me of this, that a breach of Chinese neutrality would be disastrous for both our countries. China is yet too young, too inexperienced, and might easily come to disruption should dissensions arise. . . .

"China has always had unbounded confidence in the strength of England and in her ultimate victory, but this confidence has diminished since the campaign was started to make us enter into the struggle, a campaign that has gone so far as to insist upon the sending of Chinese troops to Mesopotamia. All this leads to nothing but a lessening of England's prestige, for the Chinese can not understand why the Allies should have need of them in order to beat Germany. And now, Prime Minister Tuan has just informed the President of the Republic that the Allies are obliging the Chinese to fight for them. This does nothing but foment discord between our statesmen, and might entail serious results, even a rekindling of xenophobia and, possibly, massacres of Europeans.

"How could the Chinese masses recognize, among the Europeans, those belonging to the nation they are fighting with? It is to be feared that every one would suffer, and particularly the English who have so many interests vested in the Far East. Another very important fact to be considered is that the Mahometans will never admit being obliged to fight their co-religionists. And finally, I believe that the state of anarchy that might break out in China would only cause dissensions among members of the Entente, which would necessarily bring about disaster for the latter. It is therefore quite impossible to ask anything of China but the strictest neutrality."

When I was in Shanghai in 1927, I met a British diplomat who, like myself, was there as a tourist. We were speaking of the Nanking outrages perpetrated a few days before. In the old Ming capital, many Englishmen and some American and Italian missionaries had been killed in the most cruel manner.

"Sun foresaw all that," I murmured; and taking a copy of the telegram from my pocket, I pointed to the words:

"This . . . might entail serious results, even a rekindling of xenophobia and, possibly, massacres of Europeans."

My old English colleague had never heard of the telegram, which had not prevented him from feeling fairly sure of his Oriental knowledge when, at the Foreign Office, he was asked to submit ideas to the foreign secretary.

Another point of Sun's relation with England is generally kept in the dark. In my opinion, it deserves a few lines of explanation.

President of a Southern Republic of China in 1921, Sun was obliged, within a few months, to flee for his life; and he again became a wanderer in the wilderness which had been his home during his long years of conspiracy. But two years later, he succeeded in returning to Canton. He looked about for material support to enable him to remain in power and thus to try his famous three *Minn* in practical political life.

He saw the British Governor of Hong-Kong and asked for British help—and even for British military advisers. It was only after a polite, but categorical, refusal from the British that Sun turned to Russia and asked for Communist military advisers. The Russians accepted at once and began training Chinese officers. When the new troops were ready they were launched against the Yunnanese, all of whom were either dispersed or massacred; and the power of the "Reds" in the south seemed, at this point, firmly established.

Probably Sun Yat-sen began to regret his inability to obtain British help, very early after his "Red" triumph. Like all the thinking Chinese, what he wanted from the international point of view was equilibrium; and he certainly, by instinct, disliked the Russians more than the English.

By a strange irony of fate, it was the Russian Com-

munists who, when he died in 1924, canonized him according to the manner they had used so successfully with Lenin.

His body was embalmed, like Lenin's, with this difference, that the Chinese doctors exercised their "squeeze" on the embalming materials—and that the operation was not so successful as Lenin's, whose body may still be seen in a crystal cage, admirably preserved on the Kremlin place. Sun's poor body they were obliged to bury hurriedly.

But Sun, buried, continues to rule China more effectively than he ever did in his lifetime. If the embalming trick, an importation of the Leninistic "religion," was not a success, the Chinese may boast of having done with Sun what the Russians had not even dared to think of doing with Lenin. They have adapted their millenary tradition of rites to this new moral force born of their race—creating around the name and the words of Sun Yat-sen the same sort of rationalistic worship that their ancestors had created around Confucius five centuries before Christ.

After all, some Greek contemporary of Socrates probably would have smiled at Confucius's maxims as we have smiled at Sun's books.

# CONCLUSIONS

## Whither Europe?—Autocracy and Democracy.—Europe and America

The international mind is nothing else than the habit of thinking of foreign relations and business, and that habit of dealing with them, which regards the several nations of the civilised world as friendly and cooperating equals in aiding the progress of civilisation, in developing commerce and industry, and in spreading enlightenment and culture throughout the world.—Nicholas Murray Butler

## XXXVIII

# CONCLUSIONS

### Whither Europe?

AT THE end of a book one likes, rashly enough, to synthesize.

An optimist would have reason to think that progress, after all, does make headway in the Old World: monarchies which stood for nothing but cast-interests have disappeared; everywhere, universal suffrage appears, if only by its massive weight, as an element of poise and of social preservation, while dictatorships bring discredit upon themselves with their theatrical rattling of the sword; the longing for real peace is becoming so acute that one is no longer branded as a utopian if one speaks of the United States of Europe. . . .

But the pessimist might object that the differences have never been so deep nor so full of hatred as to-day: democracies against autocracies, overheated nationalisms against any manifestation of international mind; Socialism against the capitalistic *status quo;* Communism against moderate Socialism; the Roman Church in the field again, joining with dictatorships to fight civic and intellectual freedoms which our fathers had considered as conquered for all eternity. . . .

Since the pessimistic voices exist, they constitute a fact. No doubt that in Europe—and, by the way, even in America—a sort of intellectual fashion has arisen which consists in denouncing the failure of democratic régimes.

It seems to me, however, that if this tendency were sub-

mitted to the same analysis as a ray of light, it would easily be seen that it also is far from being single-colored.

The leaders of the present campaigns against democracy try to hide their features under the most different masks: there are those who use patriotism as a weapon of hatred against neighbors in order to have nations forget their grudges and wrongs in home politics; those who speak of peace between peoples as a desirable ideal but who in no way want that peace to be so safe as to suppress competitive armaments and economic struggles; those, even, who wish for justice and peace but prefer to look upon their advent as a remote possibility lost in the nebulous regions of the distant future.

But the more I observe the masses behind the variegated group of the leaders, the more they strike me as being united to their chiefs by transitory psychological diseases rather than by a conscious mental communion.

Leaving aside those who might be termed the morbid elements, *Camelots du Roy* in France, *Stahlhelms* in Germany, Black Shirts in Italy (and the noise they make is in inverse ratio to their small numbers), we can easily detect that the undeniable present skepticism concerning traditional democratic phraseology among the amorphous masses will soon prove to be nothing but the result of an ever greater increase of democratic tendencies. True, parliamentary institutions are no longer to-day surrounded with the love, enthusiastic and naïve, which was their mainstay with the generations that followed on 1848. But this is not out of disgust with democracy, as the organizers of reactionary campaigns affect to believe, or would make us believe. It is, on the contrary, because parliamentary and democratic institutions have engendered the sensation that behind their fine phrases they are not democratic enough. To criticize parliamentarism such as existed in Italy

until the advent of Fascism, such as exists in France and in Great Britain, to maintain that it does not represent the expression of the popular will faithfully enough, means, after all, an ever deeper desire for truer democracy.

Even the rare idealistic souls who, here and there and everywhere, believe themselves to be partizans of dictatorial experiments, are probably—disillusioned democrats.

We should be altogether wrong if we allow ourselves to be deceived by the reactionary advertising throughout Europe and if we take for symptoms of a decadence of the democratic spirit what are simply the growing-pains of a deeper democratic movement.

I may be wrong, but in my opinion, the aspirations toward democracy have never been so strong as in the post-war years—precisely because they are marked by a growing discontent with the timid realizations achieved in the field of real democracy by the leaders of the generations which are now disappearing.

I, for my part, prefer criticisms, sarcasms, irritation, to the blissful certainty of our grandfathers, so naïvely convinced that an ideal state of political perfection had been reached with the Liberalism England brought forth and which the Continent copied. Progress proceeds only from discontent, never from complacency.

Undoubtedly, it is rash to make short-termed prophecies. Political writers should never forget the lesson of humility which they ought to draw from the second half of the eighteenth century, so rich, withal, in thinkers and polemists. Two great events marked the end of the century: the American Revolution, the French Revolution. None of the political works published in England, Italy or France, before the two events, contains any forecast of the coming crises; only one English traveler, Arthur Young, said, in 1770, that the French Monarchy was too rotten to last.

If it was difficult to foresee then, when each country was a world of its own, a diagnosis is even more difficult to make to-day when all countries are interlinked, when all the economic and moral currents are so much more complex than in the past and blended together as perhaps never before.

### Autocracy and Democracy

All the same, if the four years of war which covered Europe with blood give us any right to draw a few conclusions from the tragedies we witnessed, we can not but mark this: that the war was won by the peoples imbued with democratic traditions, and that the only autocratic state belonging to the democratic coalition—Russia—was the one to fall to pieces. Germany, the only one of the great European States which had achieved unity by military force and *raison d'état,*—after despising and rejecting the opportunity for unification on a democratic basis offered her in 1848,—Germany alone, powerful as she was, showed herself, in the days of trial, far weaker than she appeared to be. Germany paid the penalty for being nothing but an authoritarian and military State devoid of liberal traditions, that is—contrary to what the German Marxists believed as naïvely as their brothers the Junkers—far more of a young and backward country than a country politically advanced.

Another example may be added: Austria-Hungary, the only one of the great European States which was bound by its very nature to suppress national freedoms and individualities, has fallen to pieces. We saw, in the first chapters of this book, that there was no room left in a modern world for an Austria of titled landowners with her sovereign the last to believe sincerely in his divine right.

The bitter experience of history is more eloquent than any philosophical generalization.

But if we decide to look into the conceptions constituting the ideals now advertised as possessing a miraculous efficacy, supposedly not to be found in the ideal of liberty and democracy, what do we find?

Let us go into the matter as dispassionately as we should make a chemistry experiment. As intellectual ideal we find only the principle of the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest. It ought to make even the most enthusiastic doubt this principle when it is seen that it inspires and justifies alike the Communistic dictatorship and the opposite, or apparently opposite, Fascist dictatorship.

In Moscow they say that the working class is the only producing class and that, therefore, it has the right to rule and decide. In the capitals where the nationalistic and autocratic verb is preached, they apply this thesis to States and races instead of to social classes, which shows, incidentally, how easily the hardest lessons are forgotten. Germany fell because she had invented the slogans of "pure race," "chosen people," "predestined country." The same lamentable, foolish bragging is now heard from what used to be the other side of the trenches.

How is it, one may ask, that such a vulgar and bloody doctrine and so great a mental depression have become possible?

As there is an explanation for everything, so there is for this: the principle of democracy had become so evident and so generally admitted that, perhaps, too many consequences were drawn from it. As a result, there were bound to be some fallacies, some excessive generalizations. Thus it happened that we came to realize that, in some fields such as the economic, the religious and the colonial, for instance, there were traditions and dangers which could not be disposed of simply by the laws of democracy.

These and analogous problems are partial, special, his-

torical and practical problems which can not be quoted as failures of democracy. Great as democracy is, life has mysteries and difficulties that no political credo can solve. But for a glorious century this credo had seemed so high and infallible that it fell somewhat into disrepute when partial failures became apparent.

All the same, and admitting this, and in spite of this—the only principle still governing the world is the principle of democracy. I am convinced that democracy will prove true even in the field where it now seems most trampled on—I mean in Russia. Who would dare to deny that out of the movement of the Russian peasants a new democracy, a peaceful one, may blossom one day and give at last to old Czaristic Russia, and to new Bolshevik Russia, the human dignity they never had?

The very exaggerations of the present hatreds are really the birth-pangs of a safer and more comprehensive democracy; all the rage against it is merely the last effort of a defeated army. Murders, exiles, sorrows, national humiliations will not have been in vain if they have taught that the fruits of liberty can only be preserved through liberty, and that their preservation is, in reality, a constantly reviving creation.

## Europe and America

These problems and preoccupations are not only European. America can not be immune from them, if only because, after the war, she was not immune from that fever common to all the belligerent states: fear of Bolshevism. Bolshevism and Fear-of-Bolshevism have been, are still, the two diseases of the Western World, of that world where the ocean, bound to become smaller and smaller, is slowly assuming the part of common lake, which was played for centuries in Europe by the Mediterranean Sea.

That is why it will become more and more natural that the books we shall exchange across the ocean will lose that somewhat irritating manner of the pedagogical text-book or of the voyage of discovery. The Westerners living around the ocean have, ever more seldom, anything extraordinarily new to tell one another in the field of abstract ideas; to mention these ideas briefly is enough to evoke analogous reflections on the other side.

And this fact—if we think of it—is a new argument against the rather conceited hopes of those who advocate the return of autocratic régimes. Autocratic régimes are essentially conceivable only with barbed wires from country to country; they are invoked to strengthen a country against her neighbor. But the very fact that their theories assume the pace of a fashion and rapidly spread everywhere, shows that there is no more room in the world for selfish national creeds, conceived as antithetical to other creeds.

We are already much more of a whole than we are yet able to realize.

THE END

# INDEX

# INDEX


Abdul-Hamid, Sultan, 166, 352, 354, 362
*Action Française, L'*, 340
Aehrenthal, Count
  and annexation of Bosnia, 58-59
  and conversations with Sforza, 332
  and Italy, 61-64
  and Pachich, 154, 155
  at Buchlau, 59
  diplomatic posts, 56-58
  family and education of, 55
  love for Austria, 60
  *See* Chapter V
Aehrenthal, Baron J. B., 55
Albert, King (of the Belgians), 51, 267, 271
  and battle of Yser, 263-265
  characteristics of, 265-266
  *See* Chapter XXIV
Albertini, Luigi, 305
Alessio, Giulio, 320
Alexander, King (of Serbia), 152
Amendola, Giovanni, 320
Amet, Admiral, 356, 363
Andrassy, Count, 60
Aosta, Duke of, 301
Apponyi, Count Albert, 72, 73
Asquith, Lord
  and Edward VII, 261
  and Lloyd George, 183
  and Salonika expedition, 230-231
  member of intellectual aristocracy, 200, 205
*Avanti, L'*, 295
Avarna, Duke, 64

Badoglio, Marshal, 122-124, 127, 128
Baernreither, Doctor, 155
Bakunin, Michael, 148
Baldwin, Stanley
  and Chamberlain, 206
Baldwin, Stanley—*cont.*
  as a Liberal, 185, 186
  as Prime Minister, 98, 193
Balfour, Arthur
  as Liberal, 204
  at Peace Conference, 189
  at Washington Conference, 200, 202
  member of intellectual aristocracy, 199-200
  statesmanship of, 200-201
  style of, 202-203
  *See* Chapter XVII
Baltazzi, Alexander, 34
Barrès, Maurice, 211, 224
Bekir Sami Bey, 366, 367
Benedek, L. von, 23-25
Benedict XV, Pope
  and Durazzo-Pallavicino
  and "peace without victory," 142-145
  and a Pontifical State, 332, 333
  and Popular Party, 338-339
  and Rampollo, 140
  and Sturzo, 141-142
  and Wilson, 144-145, 147
  comparison with Pius X, 138-139
  democracy of, 140-141, 142-143
  election of, 137-138
  legend about, 130
  *See* Chapter XII
Berchtold, Count
  and Buchlau meeting, 59
  and Serbia, 152, 153, 154, 156, 297
  and Tisza, 73, 74
  appointed to succeed Aehrenthal, 65
  letter from Count Palffy, 132n.
Bertolini, Pietro, 295
Bethmann-Hollweg, T. von, 62, 74

Billot, Cardinal, 137
Bismarck, Prince, 15
and Andrassy, 60
and German unity, 286
and the *impondérables*, 152
and William I, 27
Bissolati, Leonida, 167
and an Anglo-Italian offensive, 176
and destruction of Austria, 301
and the Fiume formula, 315
and Salvemini, 304
as a Liberal, 296
comparison with others, 255
idealism of, 258-260
in the war, 257-258
thrown out of Socialist Party, 256-257, 259
*See* Chapter XXIII
Bonaparte, Louis (Prince Impérial), 83-84, 85
Bonaparte, Napoleon
*See* Napoleon I
Bonar Law, Andrew
ability of, 194, 195
and Lloyd George, 183, 185
and war debts, 196-198, 216
comparison with Giolitti, 194
early history of, 193
*See* Chapter XVI
Bonomi, Ivanoe, 245
and Bissolati, 257, 295
and Treaty of Rapallo, 246, 248
Boselli, Paolo, 120
Boulogne Conference, 174, 368
Bourchier, J. D.
and the Balkan alliance, 165
Bragança, Princess Marie-Josepha, 268
Briand, Aristide, 184, 274, 367
and Asquith, 230-231
and Clemenceau, 232
and Lloyd George, 191, 229
and Locarno, 228, 231
and Salonika expedition, 228, 230
and Stresemann, 208, 222
comparison with Poincaré, 210
Briand, Aristide—*cont.*
idealism of, 231, 234-235
patriotism of, 227-228, 234
skill of, 231, 234-235
*See* Chapter XXI
Brown, Philip M., 363
Buchanan, Sir George, 253
Butler, Nicholas Murray, 399

Cadorna, Marshal, 113-119
and Diaz, 124, 125
and Serbia, 300, 301
relegated to Versailles, 120
Caillaux, Joseph, 40, 210, 223
Calthorpe, Admiral, 355, 356, 359, 363
Cambridge, Duke of, 83
Caneva, General, 118
Carducci, Giosue, 312, 313
Carey, Captain
and the Prince Impérial, 83-84
Carlotti, Marquis
and Sazonow, 294
Cavallotti, Felice, 239
Caviglia, Marshal, 128
Cavour, Count
and Victor Emmanuel II, 27
as realist, 255
contribution he made to Italy, 15, 286, 336
honesty of, 296
Cecil, Lord, 200, 204
Chamberlain, Austin
and France, 214
and League of Nations, 207
and Lloyd George, 183
and Locarno, 207-208
weakness of, 206
*See* Chapter XVIII
Chamberlain, Joseph, 193
Chelmsford, Lord, 83-84
Chiocca, Canon, 87n.
Chotek, Countess Sophie
*See* Hohenberg, Duchess of
Churchill, Winston, 109, 183, 265, 355, 370

Clemenceau, Georges
and Briand, 232
and Foch, 109
and Poincaré, 209-210
and Russia, 250
and Venizelos, 170, 172
Conrad von Hötzendorf, Baron
and Franz Ferdinand, 45, 48
and Italians on the Piave, 122
and the war, 62-63, 153
Constantine, King, 166, 168, 169, 177, 178, 368
Coudenhove, Count, 235n.
Crispi, Francesco, 238
Croce, Benedetto, 252
Cromer, Lord, 200
Cromwell, 345
Curzon, Lord
and Balfour, 204
and Lloyd George, 91, 92, 94, 96, 183, 184, 216
and Poincaré, 94-95
and Turkey, 92-94, 97, 359, 365
as viceroy, 90-91
early history of, 89-90
pomposity of, 98
*See* Chapter VIII
Curzon, Alfred, 89

Damad Ferid Pasha, 358, 362
D'Annunzio, Gabriele
and Fiume, 243, 316-318
and the war, 314
decadence of, 312
*See* Chapter XXX
Davis, John W., 202, 203
Déak, F., 27
De Lai, Cardinal, 135
Della Chiesa, Giacomo
*See* Benedict XV
Depretis, Agostino, 238, 312
Derby, Lord, 183
D'Esperey, Marshal Franchet, 169
De Zerbi, Rocco, 310
Diaz, Marshal, 122-129, 300
Didon, Father, 224
Di Rienzo, Cola, 321, 327
Disraeli, Benjamin (Lord Beaconsfield), 148, 176, 183
Dmowski, R., 375
Draga, Queen, 152
Dudzeele, Count
and Tisza, 75
Durazzo-Pallavicino, Marquis, 139

Edward VII, King
and Aehrenthal, 59
and King George, 165
and Germans, 261
brilliancy of, 265
Elisabeth, Empress
and Rudolf, 40
anarchism of, 35-36
compared with Queen Elisabeth, 267, 271
Franz Joseph's telegram to, 30
Elisabeth, Queen (of the Belgians), 51, 263
and her father, 268-269
comparison with Empress Elisabeth, 267, 271
simplicity of, 266-267, 271
talents of, 267, 269-270
*See* Chapter XXIV
Enver Pasha, 370
Eugène of Savoy, Prince, 54, 117
Eugénie, Empress, 192
and Prince Impérial, 83-85
*See* Chapter VII
Evans, Doctor
and Empress Eugénie, 81

Facta, Luigi, 319-322
Fasciotti, Baron, 293
Fascism, 243, 249, 253, 254, 316, 323-330, 341, 403
Federzoni, Luigi, 247
Fehrenbach, 222, 223
Ferdinand, King (of Bulgaria), 281, 282-283
Ferrata, Cardinal, 137
Ferry, Jules, 226

*Figaro, Le,* 220
Fisher, Lord, 196
Foch, Marshal
and battle of the Yser, 264
and Bonaparte, 103-104, 105
and occupation of Ruhr, 105-108
and situation on Piave, 118-119, 308
and Turkey, 105, 109
and Versailles Treaty, 110
*See* Chapter X
France, Anatole, 231
Franz Ferdinand
*See* Habsburg, Archduke Franz Ferdinand
Franz Joseph
and Aehrenthal, 60, 61, 63, 65
and the *Ausgleich,* 27-28, 68
and Benedek, 23-24, 25
and Church, 28-29
and divine right, 30-31
and Dualism, 28
and Franz Ferdinand, 29, 31, 46-47, 49, 52
and Nicholas I, 25-26
and Rudolf, 29, 35, 41
and Sforza, 22-23
and Tisza, 73, 74
egoism of, 24-25
"heirs" of, 33
ministers of, 26-27
war guilt of, 131
*See* Chapter II
French, Sir John, 264

Garibaldi, Giuseppe, 238, 255, 314
Gasparri, Cardinal, 137
George V, King, 262
George, King (of Greece), 164-165, 311
Ghandi, M., 392
Giesl, Baron, 156
Giolitti, Federico, 237
Giolitti, Giovanni
and Adriatic question, 243-249
and Church and State, 243, 334
Giolitti, Giovanni—*cont.*
and expeditions against Bolsheviks, 170
and Facta, 319, 321, 322
and factories, 250, 251, 252
and failure of Austrian *coup,* 155
and Fascism, 253-254
and Italy's obligation to Triple Alliance, 294
and Karolyi, 77n.
and occupation of Lybia, 58
and Soviet Russia, 351
and strikes, 240
and the war, 241-242, 299
as Liberal, 296, 312
comparison with others, 194, 255
economic measures of, 242-243
estimates of, 236-237
life of, 238-239
*Memoirs,* quoted, 247-248, 251
*See* Chapter XXII
Gladstone, William E., 159, 186, 199, 261, 311
Goluchowski, Count, 57-58, 60, 61n.
Grey of Falloden, Lord, 186
Guesde, J., 274
Guicciardini, Count, 61, 62n.

Habsburg, Archduchess Isabelle, 43, 44
Habsburg, Archduchess Stéphanie, 33, 39
Habsburg, Archduke Abert, 24, 25, 39
Habsburg, Archduke Franz Ferdinand
and federalism, 45-46, 48-49, 50
and Italians, 50-51
and rights of succession, 31
and Sarajevo, 52-53
and Sophie Chotek, 43-44
and Tisza, 73
and the war, 47-48
Catholicism of, 43, 44, 47
comparison with Archduke Rudolf, 33, 42-43

Habsburg, Archduke Franz Ferdinand—*cont.*
death of, 152, 157, 158, 160
statesmanship of, 49-50
Habsburg, Archduke Frederick, 43
Habsburg, Archduke Johann, 22, 39-40
Habsburg, Archduke Ludwig Salvator, 22
Habsburg, Archduke Rudolf
and Archduke Johann Salvator, 39, 40
and Mary Vetsera, 34, 38-39, 40, 41
and William II, 38
Catholicism of, 36-37
comparison with Franz Ferdinand, 33, 42
conflict in, 35-36, 40
death of, 29, 34-35, 39
liberalism of, 37, 41
Haldane, Lord, 200, 205
Harington, General, 364
Heine, Heinrich, 35
Henderson, Arthur, 274
Hermite, Louis, 93
Herriot, Edouard, 199, 224
Hohenberg, Duchess of, 31, 33, 43, 44, 47, 53
Hoyos, Count, 34, 35

Izvolsky, 59, 280

Jagow, G. von, 62
Jaurès, 219, 349
Joffre, Marshal, 116, 120, 264
Jonnart, C., 169
Jordan, Sir John, 390
Jovanovich, Jovan, 152, 157
Jovanovich, Ljuba, 158-161

Kang Yu-wei, 227, 388
Karageorgevich, King Peter, 152
Karl, Emperor, 127
Karolyi, Count Michael, 76-77
Kerenski, 391
Kiderlin-Waechter, H. von, 62
Kitchener, Lord, 299
Krassin, Leonid
and capitalists, 276-277
and Lenin, 276, 277, 279, 349, 350
as ambassador, 280
as a Westerner, 279
*See* Chapter XXVII
Kuang Hsu, Emperor, 387, 388, 390
Kun, Bela, 76

Labriola, Antonio, 255
Lassalle, Ferdinand, 383
Lausanne Conference, 96-97, 178, 179
Lécot, Cardinal, 133
Ledokowski, Father, 145
Leishman, J. G. A., 21
Lenin, Nikolai, 15, 382, 385
and Krassin, 276, 277, 279, 349, 350
and Marx, 349, 352
and Sun Yat-sen, 392, 398
books of, 348-349, 350
influence of, 348-349, 350
"testament" of, 381
two aspects of, 353
*See* Chapter XXXIII
Leo XIII, Pope, 134, 140, 256, 331-332, 333
Leopardi, Giacomo, 139, 312, 314
Leopold I, King, 262
Leopold II, King, 33, 263
Le Tocq, 83
Li Hung-chang, 387, 391
Lincoln, Abraham, 262
Lloyd George, David, 148, 222, 243, 253, 274
"abilities" of, 187-188
and Bonar Law, 185, 195, 196, 198
and China, 395
and Curzon, 91, 92-94, 96
and Poincaré, 216, 217
and Poland, 375
and Turkey, 92, 105, 190, 359, 365, 368, 370
and Venizelos, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176-177, 179

Lloyd George, David—*cont.*
as a Liberal, 185-186
as a Radical, 186-187, 189
comparison with Briand, 229
idealism of, 188-189
Loisy, Father, 134
London Conference of 1921, 366
London, Treaty of, 114, 161, 171, 241, 299, 300, 301, 303, 304, 307
Louis-Philippe, 111
Lung Yu, Empress, 389

Macdonald, Ramsay, 98, 185, 394
Machiavelli, 255, 289, 330
Mahmud Shevket Pasha, 354
Mameli, Goffredo, 255
Manin, Daniele, 160
Manzoni, Alessandro, 312, 314
Marchiafava, Ettore, 136
Margutti, General, 32
Marie-Louise, Empress, 23
Marinetti, F. T., 324
Marschall, Baron, 292
Marx, Karl, 256, 275, 349, 352, 382
Masaniello, 327
Maurras, Charles, 272, 313, 326
Mazarin, 148
Mazzini, 19, 87n., 159, 255, 256, 286, 305, 313, 314, 315, 316
Mercier, Cardinal, 137, 138
Merry del Val, Cardinal, 135, 137, 140
Metternich, Prince, 81
Michaelis, Georg, 144
Milan, King, 154
Millerand, Alexandre, 104, 274
and *Affaire Dreyfus,* 224
and decentralization, 225-226
and Franco-German problem, 222-223
and Lloyd George, 105, 191, 366
and the Ruhr, 106
and Waldeck-Rousseau, 220-221
as Socialist, 218-219, 220
at Spa, 174, 221
*See* Chapter XX
Montenuovo, Prince, 23, 47, 53
Monti, Baron, 139
Monts, Count, 62
Morley, Lord, 201, 205
Murray, Gilbert, 186
Murri, Romolo, 134
Mussolini, Benito, 260
and Bissolati, 256, 257, 259
and March on Rome, 320, 322
and Napoleon III, 328
and neutrality, 295
and reparations, 197, 216
and Sforza, 97, 107
and Treaty of Rapallo, 246, 248
as Fascist leader, 327
contradictions of, 325
fourteen articles of, 324-325, 326
*See* Chapter XXXI
Mustafa Kemal Pasha, 174
and Italian occupation, 363
and his recall, 360-361
as military leader, 369-370
attack on Greeks, 367-368
career of, 354-355
debt to England, 355
policy of, 371-373
reforms of, 368-369
strength of, 365-366
xenophobism of, 365
*See* Chapter XXXIV

Napoleon I, Emperor, 103-104, 105, 115, 148, 183, 226, 327, 374
Napoleon III, Emperor, 23, 81, 86, 328
Neri, Filippo, 255
Neuilly, Treaty of, 170, 283
Nicholas I, Emperor, 25
Nicholas II, Emperor, 348
Nicholas, King (of Montenegro), 153, 165
Nietzsche, F., 312, 313
Nigra, Count, 81, 85
Nitti, Francesco, 125, 241, 334
Northcliffe, Lord, 200

Obrenovich
*See* Alexander, King
*See also* Milan, King
*Obzor,* 335
Orlando, V. E., 307
and Diaz, 120, 123
and Fiume, 173
and Lloyd George, 191
and Sforza, 358
and Vatican, 333, 334
Orsini, Felice, 86-87
Orth, Johann
*See* Habsburg, Archduke Johann Salvator

Paar, Count, 30
Pacelli, Monsignor, 144
Pachich, Nicholas
and Austria, 154-156
and Franz Ferdinand, 50
and Italy, 161-162, 249
and Serbian Radical Party, 153-154
and Sforza, 161-163
and Sonnino, 302
and Venizelos, 166-167
and "war guilt," 152-153, 156-157, 161
silence of, 148
*See* Chapter XIII
Palffy, Count
and Pius X, 131, 132n.
Palmerston, Lord, 167
Pams, Jules, 210
Paris Peace Conference, 200, 304, 307, 309
Pascal, Blaise, 11, 16, 79, 101, 181
Pellico, Silvio, 209
Pellizzari, Monsignor, 141
Pilsudski, Marshal
and Polish frontiers, 378-379
and Polish history, 374-376, 378, 380
and Russia, 376, 377
as Socialist, 376-378
nationalism of, 379
Pius IX, Pope, 87n., 134, 142, 331
Pius X, Pope, 141, 332, 339
and Central Empires, 131-132, 142
and France, 132, 135-136, 140, 142
and Vives y Tuto, 134-135
anti-modernism of, 134
comparison with Benedict XV, 138-139
legend about, 130-131, 136
prejudices of, 133
*See* Chapter XII
Pius XI, Pope, 143
and the Concordat, 337
and Fascism, 338
and the Italian "indemnity," 337-338
and liberty, 338-341, 342, 343
and Mussolini, 342
Poincaré, Raymond, 22, 197, 223, 368
and *Affaire Dreyfus,* 224
and Clemenceau, 209-210
and Curzon, 92-95
and France, 217
and Germany, 210, 211
and Lloyd George, 191
and his prison, 209
and the Ruhr, 107, 216-217
*Au Service de la France,* 137
home policy of, 211-212
industry of, 212
mental rigidity of, 213
*Popolo d'Italia, Il,* 325, 326
Princip, Gavrilo
and the murder of Franz Ferdinand, 53
Putnik, Voivode, 156

Rampolla, Cardinal, 140, 142
Rapallo, Treaty of, 108, 123, 162, 244, 246, 247, 260
Redlick, Joseph, 25, 155
Renan, Ernest, 229, 272
Ronaldsay, Lord
*Life of Lord Curzon,* 90n.
Roosevelt, Theodore, 21

Rosebery, Lord, 200
Ruspoli, Mario, 294

Salandra, Antonio, 294, 295, 296, 298
Salisbury, Lord, 200, 204
Salvemini, Gaetano, 304
San Giuliana, Marquis di, 61, 241, 291, 296, 297, 299-300
San Remo Conference, 365
Sarto, Cardinal
*See* Pius X, Pope
Sazonow, S., 294
Schön, Baron, 62
Schönerer, J., 69
Schratt, Catherine von
mistress of Franz Joseph, 30
Schwarzenberg, Prince, 26
Scialoia, Vittorio, 243
Sembat, M., 274
Seton-Watson, R. W., 159
Sèvres, Treaty of, 170, 174, 355, 367
Sforza, Count Carlo, 51, 61n.-62n., 77n., 81, 82, 117, 121, 181, 213, 222, 259, 278, 285, 291, 292, 298, 389, 390
and Adriatic question, 161, 162, 243-249
and Aehrenthal, 64-65
and Bonar Law, 194, 197-198
and Cyrenaica, 371-372
and Diaz, 125
and Greece, 173-174
and Lloyd George, 189
and occupation of factories, 251-252
and resignation as ambassador to France, 107
and Turkey, 92-94, 96, 97, 356, 360-361, 366, 367-368
and Wilson, 303
and Vatican, 331, 334-335
Simons, W. von, 222
Sonnino, Baron Sidney, 127, 161, 191, 258
and Austria, 113, 294, 295, 298, 302
Sonnino, Baron Sidney—*cont.*
and Dalmatia, 300, 307, 309
and Macedonian Front, 301-302
and Monts, 62n.
and Pachich, 162, 302
and Peace Conference, 173, 242, 304, 306-307
and Serbia, 300, 301
and Sforza, 117, 302-304, 358
and short war, 299, 305
and Treaty of London, 114, 171, 241, 299, 300, 301, 304, 307
and Triple Alliance, 297-298
character of, 296, 300-301, 303
*Green Book* of, 298
*See* Chapter XXVIII
Sorel, George, 324, 325, 326
Spa Conference, 105-106, 174, 221, 244, 295, 366
Spender, J. A., 186
Stalin, J.
and intrigue, 382
and Trotzky, 381, 382-383
task of, 384, 385
Stambulisky, A., 133
and Ferdinand, 282-283
and Peasant Party, 281, 284
and reparations, 284
and Serbia, 282
and strikers, 283-284
and Yugo-Slav union, 284-286
influence of, 287
mistakes of, 286
*See* Chapter XXVII
Stresemann, Gustav
and Briand, 208, 222
Stubel, Milli, 40
Sturzo, Luigi, 141-142, 254, 320-321, 339, 341
Sun Yat-sen, 15, 348, 387
and Allies, 395-397
and England, 395-397
and foreign capital, 395
and Lenin, 391-392, 398
and Russia, 397

Sun Yat-sen—*cont.*
Minn of, 392-394, 397
*See* Chapter XXXVII

Taafe, Count, 37
Taddei, Senator, 320, 321, 322
Taft, William H., 22
Talaat Pasha, 121, 363
Tewfik Pasha, 366, 367
Thovez, Enrico
and D'Annunzio, 318
Tisza, Countess, 71, 76
Tisza, Koloman, 26, 71
Tisza, Count Stephen
and Franz Ferdinand, 73-74
and the Hungarian aristocracy, 69
and propaganda, 69-70
and the war, 73-75
and wife, 71, 76
characteristics of, 70, 72
death of, 76-77
father's opinion of, 26
government of, 71-72
*See* Chapter VI
Tittoni, Tommaso, 171, 243
Tolstoi, Count, 103
Tornielli, Countess, 221
Treves, Claudio, 260
Tricupis, 368
Trotzky, Leo
and Lenin, 382, 383
and Marx, 382
and Stalin, 381, 382-383
gifts of, 382
Tuan, Tsi-jui, 396
Turati, Filippo, 255, 259
Tyrel, Father, 134
Tzu Hsi, Empress, 388

Vandervelde, Emile
and reconstruction, 274-275
as Socialist, 273-274, 275
*See* Chapter, XXV
Venizelos, E., 156
and agreement with Tittoni, 171-172
and King Constantine, 168
and Lloyd George, 173-177, 190
and National Defense Government, 169
and Smyrna, 173-175, 179
and Wilson, 172-173, 176
at Lausanne Conference, 178
at Peace Conference, 170-171
defeat of, 177
excuses for, 178
influence of, 172-173
services of, 164-166
*See* Chapter XIV
Versailles Treaty, 14, 109, 110, 149, 211, 214, 231, 232, 261
Vesnich, M. R., 162
Vetsera, Baroness, 34, 38
Vetsera, Baroness Mary, 34, 38-39, 40, 41
Victor Emmanuel I, King, 139
Victor Emmanuel II, King, 27, 86
Victor Emmanuel III, 257, 351
Victoria, Queen, 176, 261
and Empress Eugénie, 84-85
Visconti-Venosta, 57, 61n.-62n., 336
Vives y Tuto, Cardinal, 135, 141
Von Bülow, Prince, 57
Von Hötzendorf
*See* Conrad von Hötzendorf, Baron
Von Moltke, General, 48
Von Tschirschky, 74
Vorovski, Mechislav, 350-352

Waldeck-Rousseau, 220-221, 224
Washington Conference, 202
*Westminister Gazette,* 186
Westphalia, Treaty of, 215
Whitman, Walt, 313
William I, Emperor, 26-27
William II, Emperor, 31, 38, 48, 261, 265, 268
and Algesiras Conference, 62n.
Wilson, Sir Henry, 105

Wilson, Woodrow, 125, 144, 146, 147, 161, 172-173, 175, 176, 179, 258, 301, 302, 303, 304
Wittelsbach, Duke Charles Theodore
and Queen Elisabeth, 268

York, Duke of, 98
Young, Arthur, 403

Yuan Shi-kai
and Kuang Hsu, 387-388
and modern armies, 387
and the Regent, 388-389
and the Republic, 390
decree of, 389-390, 391
estimate of, 390-391

Zaharoff, Basile, 175
Zinoviev, 353

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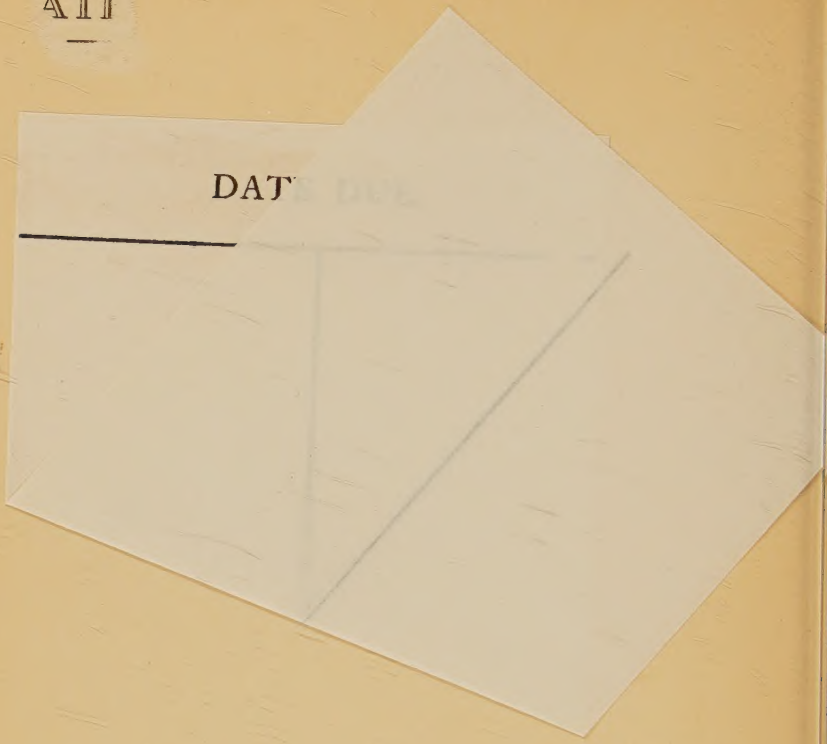

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